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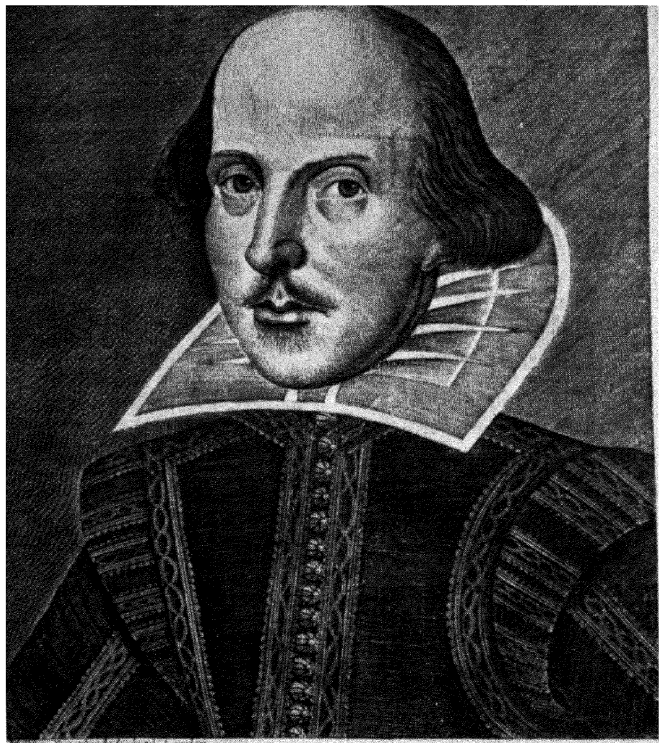
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SHAKESPEARES

COMEDIES, HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES.

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DROESHOUT ENGRAVING: FROM FIRST FOLIO.

SHAKESPEARE
AND HIS CRITICS

by

F. E. HALLIDAY



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TO

MY FATHER

PREFACE

'THOUSANDS and thousands of books have been written about Shakespeare, and most of them are mad', wrote Logan Pearsall Smith. But whatever the faults of the present work I do not think that it can fairly be charged with a lack of sanity. I have no particular axe to grind, unless a defence of the few articles in a simple and orthodox creed can be interpreted as such. I believe that Shakespeare was the author of the works attributed to him by his friends Heminge and Condell, and that with the exception of relatively few passages and scenes he wrote everything in the thirty-six plays of the First Folio; and I believe that Shakespeare is the greatest poet and dramatist who has ever written, certainly in English, probably in any language.

A creed, however, will not justify a book, least of all will it justify another book on Shakespeare. The justification of this work lies not so much in the originality of the matter itself—though even here, perhaps, some originality may be allowed—as in its arrangement, in the assembly of material that, so far as I know, has never before been brought together in one volume. There are books devoted to Shakespearean scholarship and to æsthetic appreciation, there are numerous anthologies of Shakespeare's poetry, and some of Shakespearean criticism, but none that draws all these elements together within a comparatively small compass. Nor, I think, is there any other book that illuminates as it were in the round each play and poem by the criticism that falls on it from the various angles of three centuries. For, in the words of Mr T. S. Eliot, 'when a poet is a great poet as Shakespeare is, we cannot judge of his greatness unaided; we need both the opinions of other poets, and the diverse views of critics who were not poets, in order to help us to understand'.

F. E. H.

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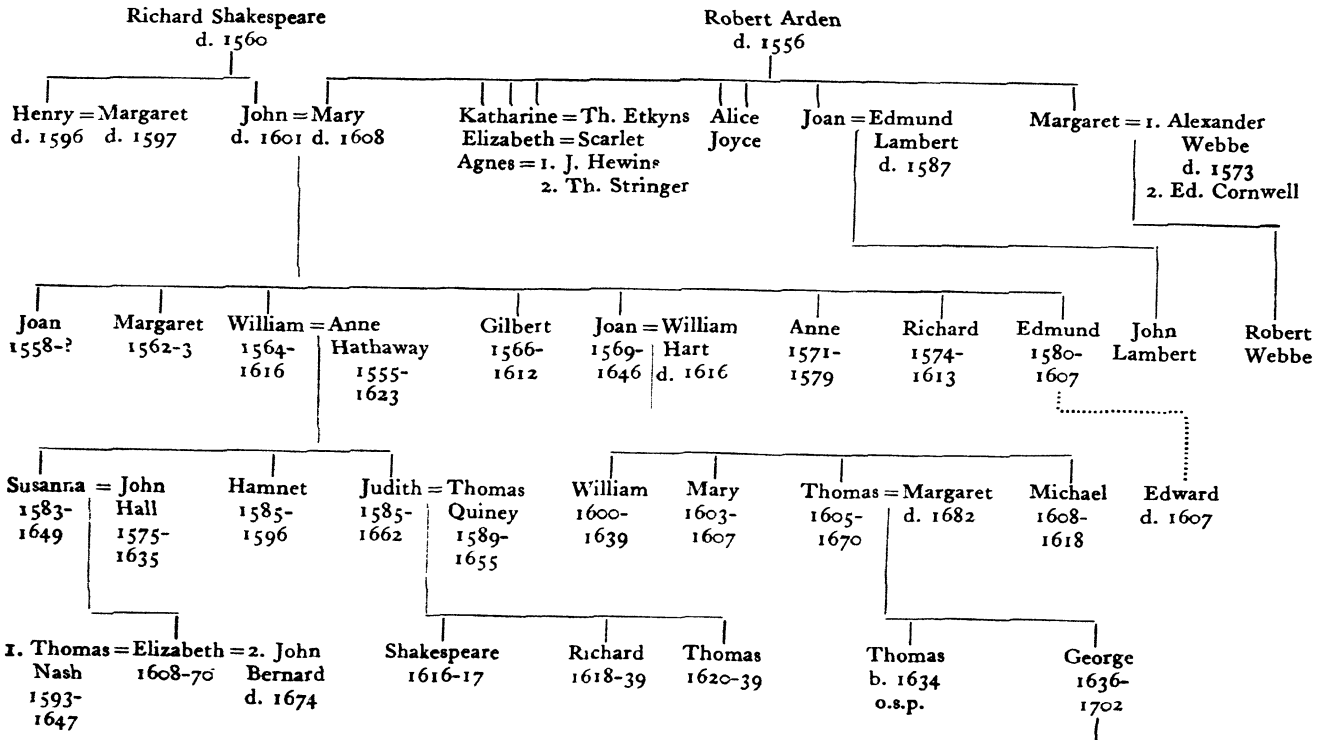
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PART ONE

THE SHAKESPEARE FAMILY



CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

THERE are three main sources on which we can draw for our knowledge of Shakespeare's life: contemporary allusions, tradition, and records of various kinds. Of these, the contemporary allusions are mainly, like those of Greene, Meres, and Jonson, of a literary nature; tradition is the basis of the early attempts at biography, a serious effort to unearth and study records at Stratford and London not being made until the late eighteenth century.

It is of course impossible to say how far these traditions are to be trusted; no doubt some of them are essentially true, others sound suspiciously fanciful, most of them are picturesque, and as they are largely responsible for the popular conception of Shakespeare it will be as well to consider their origin and note their accumulation before going on to the more prosaic biographical records.

The first man to make a sketch of Shakespeare's life was Thomas Fuller (1608-61), who spent his last fifteen or twenty years collecting material for his *Worthies of England*, published in 1662:

> William Shakespeare was born at *Stratford* on *Avon* in this County, in whom three eminent Poets may seem in some sort to be compounded. . . .[1]
>
> Many were the *wit-combates* betwixt him and *Ben Johnson*, which two I behold like a *Spanish great Gallion* and an *English man of War*; Master *Johnson* (like the former) was built far higher in Learning; *Solid*, but *Slow* in his performances. *Shake-spear*, with the *English-man of War*, lesser in *bulk*, but lighter in *sailing*, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention. He died *Anno Domini* 16 . ., and was buried at *Stratford* upon *Avon*, the Town of his Nativity.

Shortly before Fuller's death Thomas Plume, Archdeacon of Rochester, made the note:

> He was a glovers son—Sir John Mennis saw once his old Father in his shop—a merry Cheekd old man—that said—Will was a good Honest Fellow, but he durst have crackt a jeast with him at any time.

John Ward was the vicar of Stratford from 1662 to 1681, and in that part of his *Diary* written between 1661 and 1663 he noted:

[1] See p. 277.

Shakespear had but 2 daughters, one whereof M. Hall, ye physitian, married, and by her had one daughter, to wit, ye Lady Bernard of Abbingdon. . . .

I have heard yt Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit, without any art at all; hee frequented ye plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford: and supplied ye stage with 2 plays every year, and for yt had an allowance so large, yt hee spent att ye Rate of a 1,000l. a year, as I have heard. . . .

Shakespear, Drayton, and Ben Jhonson, had a merry meeting, and itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted.

When 'the magotieheaded and exceedingly credulous' John Aubrey (1626-97) collected the material for his *Brief Lives* he relied for his account of Shakespeare, at least in part, on William Beeston, an old actor and the son of Christopher Beeston, one of Shakespeare's fellow-actors in the Chamberlain's Company.[1]

Mr. William Shakespear was borne at Stratford vpon Avon, in the County of Warwick; his father was a Butcher, & I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's Trade, but when he kill'd a Calfe, he would doe it in a *high style*, & make a Speech. There was at that time another Butcher's son in this Towne, that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance & coetanean, but dyed young. This Wm. being inclined naturally to Poetry and acting, came to London I guesse about 18 and was an Actor at one of the Play-houses and did act exceedingly well: now B. Johnson was never a good actor but an excellent instructor. He began early to make essayes at Dramatique Poetry, which at that time was very lowe; and his Playes tooke well: He was a handsome well shap't man: very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth Witt. The Humour of . . . the Constable in a Midsomernight's Dreame,[2] he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks which is the roade from London to Stratford, and there was living that Constable about 1642 when I first came to Oxon. Mr. Jos. Howe is of that parish and knew him. Ben Johnson and he did gather Humours of men dayly where ever they came. One time as he was at the Tavern at Stratford super Avon, one Combes an old rich Usurer was to be buryed, he makes there this extemporary Epitaph:

[1] This Comœdie (*Every Man in his Humour*) was first Acted, in the yeere 1598. By the then L. Chamberlayne his Seruants. The principall Comœdians were:

Will Shakespeare.	Ric. Burbadge.
Aug. Philips.	Ioh. Hemings.
Hen. Condel.	Tho. Pope.
Will. Slye.	Chr. Beeston.
Will. Kempe.	Ioh. Duke.

[2] Dogberry in *Much Ado*

Ten in the Hundred the Devill allowes
But *Combes* will have twelve, he sweares & vowes:
If any one askes who lies in this Tombe:
Hoh! quoth the Devill, 'Tis my John o' Combe.

He was wont to goe to his native Country once a yeare. I thinke I have been told that he left 2 or 300li per annum there and thereabout: to a sister. I have heard Sr Wm. Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the best Comœdian we have now) say, that he had a most prodigious Witt, and did admire his naturall parts beyond all other Dramaticall writers. He was wont to say, That he never blotted out a line in his life: sayd Ben: Johnson, I wish he had blotted out a thousand. . . .

the more to be admired q[uia] he was not a company keeper lived in Shoreditch, wouldnt be debauched, & if invited to writ; he was in paine. . . .

Though as Ben. Johnson sayes of him, that he had but little Latine and lesse Greek, He understood Latine pretty well: for he had been in his younger yeares a Schoolmaster in the Countrey.

Aubrey was the first to record the suggestion that Sir William D'Avenant was Shakespeare's illegitimate son. This he did with less delicacy than Anthony Wood, for whose *Athenæ Oxonienses* he collected his material, and it was probably Wood who censored the passages printed in brackets:

Sr William Davenant Knight Poet Laureate was borne in —— street in the City of Oxford, at the Crowne Taverne. His father was John Davenant a Vintner there, a very grave and discreet Citizen; his mother was a very beautifull woman, & of a very good witt and of conversation extremely agreable . . . Mr William Shakespeare was wont to goe into Warwickshire once a yeare, and did commonly in his journey lye at this house in Oxon: where he was exceedingly respected. [I have heard parson Robert D say that Mr W. Shakespeare here gave him a hundred kisses.] Now Sr. Wm would sometimes when he was pleasant over a glasse of wine with his most intimate friends e.g. Sam: Butler author of Hudibras &c. say, that it seemed to him that he writt with the very spirit that Shakespeare, and was seemed contentended enough to be thought his Son: he would tell them the story as above. [in which way his mother had a very light report, whereby she was called a whore.]

A letter from a Mr. Dowdall to his cousin describes his visit to Stratford in 1693:

The clarke that shew'd me this Church is aboue 80 yrs old; he says that this Shakespear was formerly in this Towne bound apprentice to a

butcher; but that he Run from his master to London, and there was Recd into the playhouse as a serviture, and by this meanes had an oppertunity to be wt he afterwards prov'd. he was the best of his family but the male Line is extinguished; not one for feare of the Curse abouesd Dare Touch his Grave Stone, tho his wife and Daughters Did Earnestly Desire to be Layd in the same Grave with him.

The first mention of the deer-stealing episode was made by Richard Davies in a manuscript written some time between 1688 and 1708. Davies became rector of Sapperton, near Cirencester in Gloucestershire, in 1695, and was buried there in 1708. The passages printed in brackets are earlier entries by William Fulman, vicar of Maisey-Hampton, Gloucestershire, from 1669 to 1688. Fulman's papers passed into the possession of Davies.

(William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in Warwickshire about 1563-4.)

Much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison and Rabbits particularly from Sr Lucy who had him oft whipt & sometimes Imprisoned & at last made Him fly his Native Country to his great Advancemt. but His reveng was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate and calls him a great man & yt in allusion to his name bore three lowses rampant for his Arms

(From an Actor of Playes, he became a Composer. He dyed Apr. 23. 1616. Aetat 53, probably at Stratford, for there he is buryed, and hath a Monument) on wc He lays a Heavy curse vpon any one who shal remoove his bones He dyed a papist.

The first formal *Life* of Shakespeare was written by Nicholas Rowe and prefixed to his edition of the plays in 1709, nearly a hundred years after Shakespeare's death. Rowe brings together the accumulated traditions of the seventeenth century but adds some new ones, supplied by the great actor Betterton, who, according to Rowe, went to Stratford 'to gather up what remains he could'. Malone says that this was in 1708. Rowe's *Life* perpetuated and popularised the traditions, and the biographical prefaces of later eighteenth-century editors, of Pope, Johnson, Steevens, are for the most part reprints of or variations on the theme of Rowe.

He was the Son of Mr. *John Shakespear*, and was Born at *Stratford* upon *Avon*, in *Warwickshire*, in *April* 1564. His Family, as appears by the Register and Publick Writings relating to that Town, were of good Figure and Fashion there, and are mention'd as Gentlemen. His Father, who was a considerable Dealer in Wool, had so large a Family, ten

Children in all,[1] that tho' he was his eldest Son, he could give him no better Education than his own Employment. He had bred him, 'tis true, for some time at a Free-school, where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little *Latin* he was Master of: But the narrowness of his Circumstances, and the want of his assistance at Home, forc'd his Father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further Proficiency in that Language. . . .

Upon his leaving School, he seems to have given intirely into that way of Living which his Father propos'd to him; and in order to settle in the World after a Family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very Young. His Wife was the Daughter of one *Hathaway*, said to have been a substantial Yeoman in the Neighbourhood of *Stratford*. In this kind of Settlement he continu'd for some time, 'till an Extravagance that he was guilty of, forc'd him both out of his Country and that way of Living which he had taken up; and tho' it seem'd at first to be a Blemish upon his good Manners, and a Misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily prov'd the occasion of exerting one of the greatest *Genius's* that ever was known in Dramatick Poetry. He had, by a Misfortune common enough to young Fellows, fallen into ill Company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of Deer-stealing, engag'd him with them more than once in robbing a Park that belong'd to Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot*, near *Stratford*. For this he was prosecuted by that Gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill Usage, he made a Ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first Essay of his Poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the Prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his Business and Family in *Warwickshire*, for some time, and shelter himself in *London*.

It is at this Time, and upon this Accident, that he is said to have made his first Acquaintance with the Play-house. He was receiv'd into the Company then in being, at first in a very mean Rank; but his admirable Wit, and the natural Turn of it to the Stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary Actor, yet as an excellent Writer. His Name is Printed, as the Custom was in those Times, amongst those of the other Players, before some old Plays, but without any particular Account of what sort of Parts he used to play; and tho' I have inquir'd, I could never meet with any further Account of him this way, than that the top of his Performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. . . .

Besides the advantages of his Wit, he was in himself a good-natur'd Man, of great sweetness in his Manners, and a most agreeable Companion; so that it is no wonder if with so many good Qualities he made himself acquainted with the best Conversations of those Times. Queen

[1] Betterton made a mistake here in his researches into the Stratford Parish Register. Shakespeare's father had eight children, two of whom were called Joan. Betterton may have counted only one Joan, but added the three children of another John Shakespeare in the Register.

Elizabeth had several of his Plays Acted before her, and without doubt gave him many gracious Marks of her Favour: . . . She was so well pleas'd with that admirable Character of *Falstaff*, in the two Parts of *Henry* the Fourth, that she commanded him to continue it for one Play more, and to shew him in Love. This is said to be the Occasion of his Writing *The Merry Wives* of Windsor. . . .

What Grace soever the Queen confer'd upon him, it was not to her only he ow'd the Fortune which the Reputation of his Wit made. He had the Honour to meet with many great and uncommon Marks of Favour and Friendship from the Earl of *Southampton*, famous in the Histories of that Time for his Friendship to the unfortunate Earl of *Essex*. It was to that Noble Lord that he Dedicated his *Venus* and *Adonis*, the only Piece of his Poetry which he ever publish'd himself, tho' many of his Plays were surrepticiously and lamely Printed in his Life-time. There is one instance so singular in the Magnificence of this Patron of *Shakespear's*, that if I had not been assur'd that the story was handed down by Sir *William D'Avenant*, who was probably very well acquainted with his Affairs, I should not have ventur'd to have inserted, that my Lord *Southampton*, at one time, gave him a thousand Pounds, to enable him to go through with a Purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A Bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse Generosity the present Age has shewn to *French* Dancers and *Italian* Eunuchs.

What particular Habitude or Friendships he contracted with private Men, I have not been able to learn, more than that every one who had a true Taste of Merit, and could distinguish Men, had generally a just Value and Esteem for him. His exceeding Candour and good Nature must certainly have inclin'd all the gentler Part of the World to love him, as the power of his Wit oblig'd the Men of the most delicate Knowledge and polite Learning to admire him. . . . His Acquaintance with *Ben Johnson* began with a remarkable piece of Humanity and good Nature; Mr *Johnson*, who was at that Time altogether unknown to the World, had offer'd one of his Plays to the Players, in order to have it Acted; and the Persons into whose hands it was put, after having turn'd it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natur'd Answer, that it would be of no service to their Company, when *Shakespear* luckily cast his Eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to recommend Mr *Johnson* and his Writings to the Publick. After this they were profess'd Friends; tho' I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of Gentleness and Sincerity. . . .

Falstaff is allow'd by every body to be a Master-piece: the Character is always well-sustain'd, tho' drawn out into the length of three Plays; . . . Amongst other Extravagances, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a Dear-stealer, that he might at the same time remember his *Warwickshire* Prosecutor, under the Name of Justice *Shallow*; he has given him very near the same Coat of Arms which *Dugdale*, in his

Antiquities of that County, describes for a Family there, and makes the *Welsh* Parson descant very pleasantly upon 'em. . . .

I cannot leave *Hamlet*, without taking notice of the Advantage with which we have seen this Master-piece of *Shakespear* distinguish it self upon the Stage, by Mr. *Betterton's* fine Performance of that Part. . . . I must own a particular Obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the Passages relating to his Life, which I have here transmitted to the Publick; his Veneration for the Memory of *Shakespear* having engaged him to make a Journey into *Warwickshire*, on purpose to gather up what Remains he could of a Name for which he had so great a Value. . . .

The latter Part of his Life was spent, as all Men of good Sense will wish theirs may be, in Ease, Retirement, and the Conversation of his Friends. He had the good Fortune to gather an Estate equal to his Occasion, and, in that, to his Wish; and is said to have spent some Years before his Death at his native *Stratford*. His pleasurable Wit, and good Nature, engag'd him in the Acquaintance, and entitled him to the Friendship of the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood. Amongst them it is a Story almost still remember'd in that Country, that he had a particular Intimacy with Mr *Combe*, an old Gentleman noted thereabouts for his Wealth and Usury. . . .

He Dy'd in the 53d Year of his Age, and was bury'd on the North side of the Chancel, in the Great Church at *Stratford*, where a Monument, as engrav'd in the Plate, is plac'd in the Wall. . . .

He had three Daughters,[1] of which two liv'd to be marry'd; *Judith*, the Elder, to one Mr *Thomas Quiney*, by whom she had three Sons, who all dy'd without Children; and *Susannah*, who was his Favourite, to Dr *John Hall*, a Physician of good Reputation in that Country. She left one Child only, a Daughter, who was marry'd first to *Thomas Nash*, Esq; and afterwards to Sir John *Bernard* of *Abington*, but dy'd likewise without Issue.

This is what I could learn of any Note, either relating to himself or Family: the Character of the man is best seen in his Writings.

Rowe's *Life* firmly established the Shakespearean traditions and encouraged the further accretions of the eighteenth century, which became more and more remotely legendary until they merge into patent forgeries like those of Charles Macklin, William Henry Ireland, and John Payne Collier. For instance, an anonymous writer in 1728 tells us how Shakespeare's

> being imperfect in some Things, was owing to his not being a Scholar, which obliged him to have one of those chuckle-pated Historians for his particular Associate, that could scarce speak a Word but upon that

[1] Another error. Shakespeare had three *children*, but one was a son, Hamnet, who died in 1596.

> Subject; and he maintain'd him, or he might have starv'd upon his History.

And in the following year 'A Strolling Player', possibly John Roberts, laments

> that *Two* large *Chests* full of this Great Man's *loose Papers* and *Manuscripts*, in the hands of an ignorant *Baker* of Warwick, (who married one of the Descendants from *Shakespear*) were carelessly scatter'd and thrown about, as Garret Lumber and Litter, to the particular Knowledge of the late *Sir William Bishop*, till they were all consum'd in the generall Fire and Destruction of that Town.

By 1740 Shakespeare's epitaph on John o' Combe had acquired a twin, another on Tom o' Combe, John's brother; and as was to be expected, the 'bitter ballad', or at least one stanza of it, against Sir Thomas Lucy, which Rowe reported as lost, turned up about the middle of the century, preserved in the memory of 'a very aged gentleman':

> A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
> At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse,
> If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
> Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it:
> He thinks himselfe greate,
> Yet an asse in his state,
> We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
> If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
> Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it.[1]

These verses are quoted by George Steevens in his edition of Shakespeare, 1778. His authority was William Oldys, an antiquarian (1696-1761), who wrote a *Life* of Shakespeare, now lost. 'Mr Oldys', Steevens writes, 'had covered several quires of paper with laborious collections for a regular life of our author. . . . The following particulars, which I shall give in the words of Oldys, are, for ought we know to the contrary, as well authenticated as any of the anecdotes delivered down to us by Rowe.' And possibly to establish the authority of Oldys at the expense of Rowe he relates how 'in the manuscript papers of the late Mr Oldys it is said, that one Bowman, "an actor more than half an age on the London theatres", was unwilling to allow that his associate and contemporary Betterton had ever undertaken such a journey' (*i.e.*, to Stratford).

[1] Before the end of the century the complete ballad was discovered 'in a chest of drawers, that formerly belonged to Mrs. Dorothy Tyler, of Shottery, near Stratford'.

The story of D'Avenant's being the illegitimate son of Shakespeare was a favourite one in the eighteenth century, and Oldys embroiders the original version:

> If tradition may be trusted, Shakespeare often baited at the Crown Inn or Tavern in Oxford, in his journey to and from London. The landlady was a woman of great beauty and sprightly wit, and her husband, Mr John Davenant (afterwards mayor of that city,) a grave melancholy man, who as well as his wife used much to delight in Shakespeare's pleasant company. Their son young Will Davenant (afterwards Sir William) was then a little school-boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old, and so fond also of Shakespeare, that whenever he heard of his arrival, he would fly from school to see him. One day an old townsman observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, to see his *god*-father Shakespeare. There's a good boy, said the other, but have a care that you don't take *God's* name in vain.

Oldys is also responsible for the tradition that Shakespeare acted the part of Adam in *As You Like It*. He relates how one of the younger brothers of Shakespeare used to go to London to see him act, and how in his old age

> all that could be recollected from him of his brother *Will*, in that station was, the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song.

An anonymous letter in the *British Magazine* for 1762 gives the first version of the crab-tree story:

> My cheerful landlord . . . took me to the house where the poet was born and there I saw a mulberry-tree of that great man's planting, a piece of which I brought away with me, to make tobacco-stoppers for our vicar. . . . From thence my landlord was so complaisant as to go with me to visit two young women, lineal descendants of our great dramatic poet: they keep a little ale-house, some small distance from Stratford. On the road thither, at a place called Bidford, he shewed me in the hedge, a crab-tree, called Shakespeare's canopy, because under it our poet slept one night; for he, as well as Ben Johnson, loved a glass for the pleasure of society; and he, having heard much of the men of that village as deep drinkers and merry fellows, one day went over to Bidford, to take a cup with them. He enquired of a shepherd for the Bidford drinkers; who replied they were absent; but the Bidford sippers

> were at home; and, I suppose, continued the sheepkeeper, they will be sufficient for you: and so, indeed, they were. He was forced to take up his lodging under that tree for some hours.

This story was picturesquely elaborated by John Jordan, who was responsible for the discovery of the bitter ballad in the chest of drawers, and who ingenuously introduces the anecdote as being 'as well authenticated as things of this nature generally are'.

Johnson in his edition of Shakespeare, 1765, had only one passage to add to the *Life* of Rowe which he reprinted:

> In the time of *Elizabeth*, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horse-back to the play, and when Shakespear fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the play-house, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for *Will. Shakespear*, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while *Will. Shakespear* could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. *Shakespear* finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who when *Will. Shakespear* was summoned, were immediately to present themselves, *I am Shakespear's boy, Sir.* In time *Shakespear* found higher employment, but as long as the practice of riding to the play-house continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of *Shakespear's Boys.*

According to Johnson the anecdote was communicated to Pope by Rowe, but it is the same as that related by Robert Shiels, who was for a time Johnson's amanuensis, and Shiels prefaces his version by saying that it is 'a story which Sir William Davenant told Mr Betterton, who communicated it to Mr Rowe; Rowe told it Mr Pope, and Mr Pope told it to Dr Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman, who heard it from him, 'tis here related'.

Enough has been said to indicate the evolution of the Shakespeare myth which, up till the time of Rowe, no doubt contained a fair element of truth, but which became more and more fanciful as Shakespeare's popularity waxed and the eighteenth century waned. A more sceptical and critical attitude was taken by Edmund Malone (1741-1812), with whom the scientific study of records may be said to have begun, and by his successors, notably the indefatigable Halliwell-Phillipps, whose *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* in its

final form ran to nearly a thousand pages. It is to these records, bibliographical, theatrical, and official, as well as to the traditions and literary references that we must turn for a reconstruction of Shakespeare's life. Yet up till 1592, when Shakespeare was twenty-eight, the only records of his existence are those of his baptism, his licence to be married, and the baptism of his three children.

1564-1592

William Shakespeare's grandfather was probably Richard Shakespeare, a farmer of Snitterfield, a village four miles to the north of Stratford. He had two sons, one of whom, Henry, died in debt in 1596, the other, John, the poet's father, settling in Stratford about 1551 as a glover and dealer in agricultural produce. There he prospered and took a considerable part in the affairs of the town. In 1552 he was living in Henley St., for in that year he was fined a shilling for having a dunghill in front of his house. In 1556 he bought two houses, one adjoining the 'Birthplace' in Henley St., the other in Greenhill St., and in 1575 he bought two more houses in Stratford, but whereabouts we do not know; in 1590, however, he owned two contiguous houses in Henley St. About 1557 he was elected a town councillor, and in 1561 one of the two chamberlains of the borough; in 1565 he was an alderman, in 1568 he held the important position of bailiff, in which capacity he welcomed the first companies of actors ever to visit Stratford, and in 1571 he was chief alderman.

Meanwhile, about 1557, he had married Mary Arden, the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a small landowner of Wilmcote near Stratford, who when he died left Mary among other things some land called Asbies, his chief property at Wilmcote. John Shakespeare and Mary Arden had eight children, whose christenings are recorded in the Register of Stratford parish church:[1]

1558, Sept. 15. C. Jone Shakspere daughter to John Shakspere.
1562, Dec. 2. C. Margareta filia Johannis Shakspere.
1563, Apr. 30. B. Margareta filia Johannis Shakspere.
1564, Apr. 26. C. Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere.
1566, Oct. 13. C. Gilbertus filius Johannis Shakspere.
1569, Apr. 15. C. Jone the daughter of John Shakspere.
1571, Sept. 28. C. Anna filia magistri Shakspere.
1574, Mar. 11. C. Richard sonne to Mr John Shakspeer.
1579, Apr. 4. B. Anne daughter to Mr John Shakspere.
1580, May 3. C. Edmund sonne to Mr John Shakspere.

[1] The Register begins in 1558, but the early records are transcribed until September 1600, probably by the vicar at that time, Richard Byfield.

It is assumed that the first Joan died in infancy before the christening of the second Joan.

William, the first son and third child, was christened on April 26th, but there is no evidence to show that he was born on April 23rd, the traditional birthday, William Oldys in a marginal note of about 1750 apparently being the first to specify this date: 'The son of Mr John Shakespeare Wool Stapler was the eldest of Ten Children born 23 of April 1563.'[1] If we assume that the inscription on his monument is correct: that he died on the 23rd of April 1616 in his 53rd year—*obiit anno ætatis* 53—we can only say that he was born some time between April 24th, 1563, and April 23rd, 1564, otherwise he would have died either in his 54th or in his 52nd year.

Nor do we know that he was born in the 'Birthplace', the western house of the two in Henley St. His father had bought the eastern one and a house in Greenhill St. in 1556, and William might have been born in either of these, although it is possible that his father was living as a tenant in the western house, which was almost certainly one of the two houses that he bought in 1575. It was first identified as the birthplace in 1759, and at the Jubilee of 1769 a 'Birthroom' was supplied for the benefit of pilgrims. The western house in Henley St. was chosen, no doubt, because it had then been occupied for more than a hundred years by the Harts, descendants of the poet's sister Joan, while for a hundred years the eastern half had been an inn.

William Shakespeare was, then, the son of a prosperous business man, and of the daughter of a wealthy farmer who was probably connected with some of the well-known county families. But of his childhood and boyhood we know nothing, though it seems reasonable to suppose that he went to the town grammar school, a good one, which for the sons of burgesses was free, and provided a liberal education mainly in the Latin language and literature for boys up to the age of sixteen. He might have stayed there until 1580, though Rowe affirms that 'the narrowness of his circumstance, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from school'.

Certainly when William was thirteen or fourteen his father appears to have got into difficulties, for in 1578 he sold his wife's interest in her father's Snitterfield estate for £4, let Asbies, and mortgaged her other property at Wilmcote to her brother-in-law, Edmund Lambert, for £40. Then followed a number of law-suits, a fine of £40, and further embarrassment when he became involved in his brother Henry's affairs. In 1577 he ceased to attend the meetings of the

[1] Oldys does not inspire confidence. John Shakespeare was not primarily a wool stapler, and he had eight children, not ten. William was not the eldest child, and even if he was born on April 23rd, it certainly was not in 1563.

Corporation who, ten years later, appointed another alderman in his place 'for that Mr Shaxspere dothe not come to the halles when they be warned nor hathe not done of longe tyme'. In September 1592 he was prosecuted 'for not comminge monethlie to churche accordinge to hir Majesties lawes', not because he was a recusant but, according to the note of the commissioners, because of 'feare of process for debtte'.

After his baptism the next certain fact in Shakespeare's life is the record of his proposed marriage. There is no record of its solemnisation, but in the Bishop of Worcester's Register is the Entry of Licence, dated 27 Nov. 1582: 'Item eodem die similis emanavit licencia inter Willelmum Shaxpere et Annam Whateley de Temple Grafton.' This was a special licence to expedite the marriage, which might then be celebrated with only once asking of the banns, and the next day Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, farmers of Stratford, entered into a bond to exempt the bishop from all liability should any impediment later come to light imperilling the validity of the proposed marriage:

> The condicion of this obligacion ys suche that if herafter there shall not appere any Lawfull Lett or impediment by reason of any precontract consanguinitie affinitie or by any other lawfull meanes whatsoeuer but that William Shagspere on thone partie, and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the Dioces of Worcester maiden may lawfully solennize matrimony together and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe according vnto the lawes in that behalf prouided, . . . And moreouer if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solenizacion of marriadg with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir frindes, And also if the said William do vpon his owne proper costes and expenses defend & save harmles the right Reverend father in god Lord John bushop of Worcester and his offycers for Licencing them the said William and Anne to be maried togither with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwene them and for all other causes which may ensue by reason or occasion thereof, That then the said obligacion to be voyd and of none effect or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue.

There is nothing irregular in this proceeding, though it suggests haste, probably because Anne was already pregnant. But the discrepancy between the name of Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton in the licence and of Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the bond is odd. The bond, a legal document, is almost certainly correct, and the clerk who made up the record of licences in the Register must have made a mistake in his entry. Presumably the marriage took place soon after the granting of the licence.

There were several Hathaways in the parish of Stratford, and there is some uncertainty as to Anne's parentage, but it seems probable that she was the eldest daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery, who occupied the house now known as Anne Hathaway's cottage.[1] According to the inscription on her tombstone Anne was eight years older than her husband, who was only eighteen when he married her.

Shakespeare was married towards the end of 1582; his first child, a daughter Susanna, was christened in Stratford parish church on May 26th, 1583, the twins Hamnet and Judith on February 2nd, 1585:

1583, May 26. C. Susanna daughter to William Shakespeare.
1585, Feb. 2. C. Hamnet and Judeth sonne and daughter to William Shakspere.

Then, from 1585 when he was twenty-one to 1592 when he was twenty-eight, there are no records of his doings or of his whereabouts, and we are driven back to the traditions. Rowe tells us that, owing to the deer-stealing episode, 'he was oblig'd to leave his Business and Family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London'; Aubrey that he 'came to London I guesse about 18'. If Shakespeare went to London when he was eighteen it must have been very soon after his marriage, and it seems more reasonable to assume that he left Stratford at the earliest not much before the time of the birth of the twins at the beginning of 1585. As far as we know Anne and the children stayed in Stratford, for there is no record of her in London, though it is true that neither is there any further record of her in Stratford before 1601. We do not know that Shakespeare went straight from Stratford to London. Aubrey says that 'he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country', but he meant before he went to London at eighteen. There is also a tradition that he lived for a time at Dursley in the south Cotswolds. 'I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes o' the hill', says Davy to Justice Shallow. The village of Woodmancote, or Woncot as it is pronounced locally, adjoins Dursley, and both lie under Stinchcombe Hill. Arthur Vizar was buried in Dursley churchyard in 1620, and there was a family of Perkes at Stinchcombe in the sixteenth century. Dursley is only a dozen miles west of Sapperton, where Richard Davies lived, the man who first recorded Shakespeare's 'unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits', and a few miles east of Berkeley Castle, which Dr Caroline Spurgeon

[1] The house remained in the Hathaway family until 1838; it was bought by the Birthplace trustees in 1892.

thinks Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote *Macbeth*. But whenever Shakespeare went to London, we know that he was there in 1592, and moreover that he had been there long enough to establish a reputation as a dramatist.

1592-1596

Under March 3rd, 1592 (N.S.) Philip Henslowe recorded the performance of a new play, probably at the Rose Theatre:

> In the name of god Amen 1591 beginninge the 19 of Febreary my lord Stranges mene as ffoloweth 1591. . . .
> Mar. 3. ne Harey the vj iij^{li} xvj^{s} 8^{d}.

It was a popular success, for Thomas Nashe was almost certainly referring to this play, *Henry VI, Part* 1, when he wrote in his *Pierce Penilesse* (1592):

> How would it have ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least.

Six months later, on September 3rd, Robert Greene died, one of the best known of the group of dramatists, the University Wits, who had held the London stage for the last seven or eight years, and on his death-bed he wrote a farewell and an exhortation to his fellow playwrights, Marlowe, Nashe, and Peele, in his *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*:

> *To those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plaies, R.G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdome to preuent his extremities. . . .*
> Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warnd: for vnto none of you (like mee) sought those burres to cleaue: those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all haue beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imploied in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate

> your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions. I knowe the best husband of you all will neuer proue an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will neuer proue a kind nurse: yet, whilest you may, seeke you better Maisters; for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subiect to the pleasure of such rude groomes.
>
> In this I might insert two more, that both haue writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but lette their owne workes serue to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, if they perseuere to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new-commers, I leaue them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will driue the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skils not though they make a ieast at them.

The passage is ambiguous, but there can be no doubt that 'Shake-scene' is a punning reference to Shakespeare, who is described as having a 'Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde', an obvious parody of the line in 3 *Henry VI*, 'O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide'. This has been interpreted as meaning that Shakespeare, a presumptuous upstart without those benefits of a university education possessed by Greene and the other University Wits, had had the audacity to adapt their old plays, particularly the two parts of *Henry VI* which had been published anonymously as *The First Part of the Contention betwixt Yorke and Lancaster*, and *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*. It now seems certain, however, that these quartos were corrupt and surreptitious copies of Shakespeare's own text, published later in the Folio as *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3*, and the passage seems to be more simply one of spite and self-pity, which might be paraphrased, 'These ungrateful actors (Puppets, Anticks, painted monsters) who have profited by the performance of our plays will abandon you just as they have abandoned me; for one of them, an uneducated and unscrupulous upstart called Shakespeare, is imitating our work and supplying his company with plays, and because he is an actor he thinks he can write plays as well as we can. It is too late to do anything about the plays which they already have, but you will be well advised to turn to other forms of literature, or at any rate not to let that company get hold of any of your new work.' In other words, here is a new and dangerous portent, a new type of popular dramatist who is also an actor and will supply his company with plays; if the actor-dramatist becomes a common figure, who is going to buy our work, the plays of the professional and specialised dramatists?

However this may be interpreted in detail, there is no doubt of the broad fact that Shakespeare was by 1592 an actor on the London stage, and a dramatist who had already made a name for himself. This is confirmed by the printer Henry Chettle, who in his *Kind-*

Harts Dreame, published in December 1592, apologised for the part he had played in preparing Greene's pamphlet for the press:

> About three moneths since died M. Robert Greene, leauing many papers in sundry Booke sellers hands, among other his Groatsworth of wit, in which a letter written to diuers play-makers, is offensiuely by one or two of them taken; and because on the dead they cannot be auenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a liuing Author: and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy, but it must light on me. How I haue all the time of my conuersing in printing hindered the bitter inueying against schollers, it hath been very well knowne; and how in that I dealt, I can sufficiently prooue. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I neuer be: The other, whome at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, for that as I haue moderated the heate of liuing writers, and might have vsde my owne discretion (especially in such a case) the Author being dead, that I did not, I am as sorry as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooues his Art.

The first of 'the play-makers that took offence' was probably Marlowe, to whom Greene had alluded as the creator of 'that Atheist Tamberlaine', the second, Shakespeare. Some time between the beginning of September and the end of November Chettle had met Shakespeare, and it is worth emphasising his testimony, the earliest first-hand account we have of Shakespeare, that he was as pleasant a young man as he was excellent an actor, and that a number of important people had recognised the integrity of his character and his promise as a playwright.

The history of the players' companies at this time, when Shakespeare first appears as actor and dramatist, is very confused. In the eighties there were at least six companies of licensed adult actors: Leicester's, Oxford's, Sussex's, Worcester's, the Admiral's, and the Queen's. Of these the Queen's Men were, from their formation in 1583 until 1590, the most important, but then two other companies come to the fore, the Lord Admiral's, whose leading actor was Edward Alleyn, and Lord Strange's. The latter company had been strengthened by the addition of some of Leicester's Men on the death of the Earl of Leicester in 1588. Strange became Earl of Derby in 1593, and on his death in 1594 his place as patron was filled by the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, the first Lord Hunsdon, and shortly after his death in 1596 by his son George Carey, second Lord

Hunsdon, who also became Lord Chamberlain. It was Strange's Men who performed *Henry VI*, *Part* 1 in March 1592, but *Henry VI*, *Part* 3 was acted by Pembroke's Men, and *Titus Andronicus*, according to the title-page of the 1594 Quarto, by 'the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembrooke, and Earle of Sussex their Seruants', and in June 1594 Henslowe records a performance of the play at Newington Butts, where both 'my Lord Admeralle men & my Lorde Chamberlen men' were playing. Before 1594, then, Shakespeare might have written for a number of companies, but in December of that year he performed at Court as a member of the Chamberlain's Men, probably as a sharer in the profits of the company: 'Dec. 26, 27. William Kempe William Shakespeare & Richard Burbage seruantes to the Lord Chamberleyne'. Shakespeare remained with this company until the end of his career on the stage, and there is no evidence that he ever wrote for any other.

For the greater part of the years 1593 and 1594 the London theatres were closed on account of the plague, and it has been conjectured, on the evidence of the plays with Italian settings, that Shakespeare travelled in Italy. It has also been suggested that he spent the time at Titchfield, the home of the young earl of Southampton, and there wrote a first version of the courtly *Love's Labour's Lost*. More prosaically and more probably he went on tour in the provinces with one of the companies, though there is no evidence of his having done so. We have no record of Shakespeare's whereabouts from the end of 1592 when Chettle met him in London until the end of 1594, when he was one of the Chamberlain's Men; but it was during the plague years that he published the two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*.

Venus and Adonis, 'the first heir of my invention', the first book issued under his own name, and apart from *Lucrece* the only book that Shakespeare himself saw through the press, was published in 1593. It was dedicated to Henry Wriothesley,[1] third Earl of Southampton, an immensely wealthy and handsome young man of nineteen, a favourite of the Queen, a friend of Essex, and a patron who appears to have stood Shakespeare in good stead. It is an elaborate and artificial piece of work, the lovely imagery loosely overlying the matter with which it has little organic connection, static rather than dynamic, and though the theme is wanton it lacks real passion, as though Shakespeare were more interested in the purblind hare and the 'dive-dapper peering through the wave' than in Venus leading Adonis 'prisoner in a red-rose chain'. It was a

[1] Pronounced *Rotsly* or *Rot-es-ly*.

popular poem: there are a number of contemporary allusions to it, and it was reprinted nine times before his death, and, plays being scarcely considered as serious literature, it established him as a literary man. It was as a poet rather than as a dramatist that Shakespeare first won recognition.

In the dedication Shakespeare had promised his patron 'to take aduantage of all idle houres, till I haue honoured you with some grauer labour', and in the following year he published *The Rape of Lucrece*, again under his own name, and again with a dedication to Southampton: 'The loue I dedicate to your Lordship is without end: . . . What I haue done is yours, what I haue to doe is yours, being part in all I haue, deuoted yours.' *Lucrece* is more dramatic, though more rhetorical and didactic, than *Venus and Adonis*, and it enhanced still further Shakespeare's reputation as a poet, being reprinted for the fifth time in the year of his death.

Probably most of the *Sonnets* were written about this time, for though they were not published till 1609, Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* of 1598 refers to 'Shakespeare's sugred Sonnets among his private friends'. Many of them at least must have been written about the time that he was writing *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* and dedicating them to Southampton, and it seems reasonable to infer that the friend and patron addressed in them was Southampton himself. It will be remembered that Rowe on the authority of D'Avenant records how 'my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to'. The sum is fantastically large, equal to almost £10,000 of our money, but it is possible that the patron, honoured by two dedications, and perhaps the theme of the *Sonnets*, gave Shakespeare a sum of money. If so the 'purchase which he had a mind to' might have been the buying of 'a fellowship in a cry of players'. Southampton came of age in October 1594, and shortly afterwards Shakespeare was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company, acting at Court, while his *Comedy of Errors* was performed at Gray's Inn on the following day.

It is probable that the *Sonnets* reflect a real episode in Shakespeare's life. Though the Elizabethan sonnet was admittedly an artificial form, and a sonnet sequence a fashionable and courtly convention, it is possible that Shakespeare really had a deep attachment for a young and influential friend who robbed him of his mistress and showed favour to a rival poet, that there were quarrels, estrangements, and reconciliations. There is nothing improbable in the story, but to pursue it too literally is to pursue phantoms, for we really do not know who was the friend, or the other poet, or the dark lady. Maybe

the actors were all spirits; but they sound like substance, and the ecstasy and pride, the anguish and distress, appear to be more than manufactured emotions.

It is also possible that there is a reference to another love affair of Shakespeare's in a book written about this time. Towards the end of 1594 Henry Willobie published a long dramatic poem called *Willobie his Avisa, or the True Picture of a Modest Maid and of a Chaste and Constant Wife*, in which he tells how the virtuous Avisa is assailed by a number of lovers, and finally by H.W. himself. In a prose argument to this section of the poem he describes how he confides in 'his familiar friend W.S., the old player', who was 'newly recovered of the like infection'—not necessarily for Avisa—and who turns out to be a 'miserable comforter':

> H.W. being sodenly infected with the contagion of a fantasticall fit, at the first sight of *A*, pyneth a while in secret griefe, at length not able any longer to indure the burning heate of so feruent a humour, bewrayeth the secresy of his disease vnto his familiar frend W. S. who not long before had tryed the curtesy of the like passion, and was now newly recouered of the like infection; yet finding his frend let bloud in the same vaine, he took pleasure for a tyme to see him bleed, & in steed of stopping the issue, he inlargeth the wound, with the sharpe rasor of a willing conceit, perswading him that he thought it a matter very easy to be compassed, & no doubt with payne, diligence & some cost in time to be obtayned. Thus this miserable comforter comforting his frend with an impossibilitie, eyther for that he now would secretly laugh at his frends folly, that had giuen occasion not long before vnto others to laugh at his owne, or because he would see whether an other could play his part better than himselfe, & in vewing a far off the course of this louing Comedy, he determined to see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor, then it did for the old player. But at length this Comedy was like to have growen to a Tragedy, by the weake & feeble estate that W.H. was brought vnto, by a desperate vewe of an impossibility of obtaining his purpose, til Time & Necessity, being his best Phisitions brought him a plaster, if not to heale, yet in part to ease his maladye.

To what extent the poem is biographical is difficult to say, but the theatrical imagery and the reference to W.S. as the old actor are suggestive. Add to this the counsel that W.S. gives to H.W.:

> She is no Saynt, She is no Nonne,
> I thinke in tyme she may be wonne,

which recalls Sonnet 41:

Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed,

and the fact that the reference to Shakespeare and his *Lucrece* in the commendatory verses affixed to the poem is the first known literary mention of his name, and it appears possible that W.S. is Shakespeare:

Though *Collatine* haue deerely bought,
To high renowne, a lasting life,
And found, that most in vaine haue sought,
To have a *Faire*, and *Constant* wife,
Yet *Tarquyne* pluckt his glistering grape,
And *Shake-speare*, paints poore Lucrece rape.

If W.S. is Shakespeare it is just possible that the Mr W.H. of the Sonnets is Henry Willobie. We know little about him save that he was an Oxford man and 'a scholler of very good hope' who went abroad 'voluntarily to her Maiesties service'.

The next reference to Shakespeare is in the register of Stratford parish church: 1596, *Aug.* 11. *B. Hamnet filius William Shakspere.* We must assume that from the end of 1594 to the summer of 1596 he was acting with the Chamberlain's Men and writing plays for them, and by the time of Hamnet's death he had probably written the following poems and plays:

Poems: *Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, Sonnets, (A Lover's Complaint?)*
Comedies: *The Comedy of Errors, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost, The Taming of the Shrew.*
Histories: *Henry VI Parts* 1, 2, 3, *Richard III, Richard II.*
Tragedies: *Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet.*

At the age of thirty-two, therefore, we find Shakespeare with some fourteen works to his credit, no longer an upstart crow but a very successful dramatist and poet, a comparatively wealthy man, a member of the leading company of actors, numbering Richard Burbage, William Kempe, John Heminge, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips among his colleagues and friends, according to Henry Chettle a charming man to meet, and acknowledged by 'divers of worship', the chief of whom was his patron, and possibly his intimate friend, the Earl of Southampton.

1596-1600

In 1596 Shakespeare was primarily a poet and a writer of dramatic poetry, that is of plays to which the poetry is more or less loosely

and indiscriminately applied, as in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*; as yet the play is little more than a pretext for the poetry. With the exception of Richard II and the not over-subtle Richard III, few of the serious characters in these early plays have much individuality. But there is another element applied to the framework of the plays besides the poetry, the prose comedy, and already there is a formidable list of comic characters drawn largely from low life, of whom Launce and Juliet's nurse are the best known, and it was through the medium of comedy—'pastoral-comical' and 'comical-historical'—that, during the next four or five years, Shakespeare was to develop the art of dramatic writing in which language and character are integrated and complementary.

On August 11th, 1596, Shakespeare's only son Hamnet, aged eleven and a half, was buried at Stratford, and it is possible that *King John*, which deals with the death of the young Prince Arthur, was written towards the end of this year. Anyway, it is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare came to Stratford for the funeral and renewed his acquaintance with his native town and the family which for ten or twelve years he can have seen but little of; though, according to Aubrey, 'he was wont to goe to his native Country once a yeare', there are no records of his being in Stratford during this time. Nor do we know how Anne and her children fared, the only mention of her between her marriage and her husband's death being that of her indebtedness to Thomas Whittington of Shottery, a debt that was still unpaid according to his will in 1601:

> Item I geve and bequeth unto the poore people of Stratford 40^{s}. that is in the hand of Anne Shaxspere, wyf unto Mr Wyllyam Shaxspere, and is due debt unto me, beyng payd to myne Executor by the said Wyllyam Shaxspere or his assigns, accordyng to the true meanyng of this my wyll.

But in addition to Hamnet's death there is other evidence to show that he resumed his relations with Stratford. In 1596 the persecution of his father for debt ceased, and there can be little doubt that it was his son's energy that made John Shakespeare apply to the College of Heralds for a grant of arms, an action which he had first contemplated when he was bailiff of Stratford in 1568-69. A draft was prepared in October 1596, and the grant was apparently made, for in 1599 he made a further application for leave to impale the arms of Arden. It is not certain that this second grant was made, for if it was the privilege was not exercised. The draft of 1599 is largely a repetition of that of 1596 and reads as follows:

. . . Wherfore being solicited and by credible report informed, That John Shakespere, nowe of Stratford vppon Avon in the Counte of Warwik Gentleman, Whose parent great Grandfather and late Antecessor, for his faithefull & approved service to the late most prudent prince king H 7 of famous memorie, was aduanced & rewarded with Landes and Tenements geven to him in those partes of Warwikeshere where they have continewed bie some descentes in good reputacon & credit. And for that the said John Shakespere, having maryed the daughter & one of the heyrs of Robert Arden of Wellingcote in the said countie, And also produced this his Auncient cote of Arms heretofore Assigned to him whilest he was her maiesties officer & Baylife of that Towne. In consideration of the premisses, And for the encouragement of his posterite vnto whom suche Blazon of Arms & atchevementes of inheritance from theyre said mother, by the auncyent Custome & Lawes of Arms may Lawfullie descend, We the said Garter and Clarentieulx have Assigned, graunted, & confirmed & by these presentes exemplified Vnto the said John Shakespere, and to his posterite that Shield and cote of Arms viz. In a field of Gould vppon a Bend Sables A Speare of the first the poynt vpward hedded Argent, And for his creast or cognizance A Falcon, with his wynges displayed, standing on a wrethe of his coullers Supporting a Speare Armed hedded or & steeled sylvor fixed vppon a helmet with mantelles & tasselles as more playnly maye appeare depicted on this Margent. And we have lykewise vppon an other escucheone impaled the same with the Auncyent Arms of the said Arden of Wellingcote, Signefeing thereby that it maye & shalbe Lawefull for the said John Shakespere gentleman to beare & vse the same Shieldes of Arms Single or impaled as aforesaid during this natural Lyfe, And that it shalbe Lawfull for his children yssue & posterite (Lawfully begotten) to beare vse & quarter & shewe forthe the same with theyre dewe differences. . . .

In 1602 there was some criticism of the grant, to which Garter and Clarencieux Kings of Arms replied that 'the man was A magestrat in Stratford vpon Avon. A Justice of peace he maryed A daughter and heyre of Ardern, and was of good substance and habelité.'

In May 1597 Shakespeare bought New Place, the biggest house in Stratford, for £60:

> Inter Willielmum Shakespeare querentem et Willielmum Underhill generosum deforciantem, de vno mesuagio duobus horreis et duobus gardinis cum pertinenciis in Stratford super Avon, . . . Et pro hac recognicione, remissione, quieta clamancia, warantia, fine et concordia idem Willielmus Shakespeare dedit predicto Willielmo Underhill sexaginta libras sterlingorum.

A curious incident was connected with the transaction: the vendor,

William Underhill, was poisoned by his son Fulke, and Shakespeare had to complete the transfer with the younger brother Hercules, who succeeded to the estate in 1602. In this second deed Shakespeare is described as *generosus*, or gentleman, and the house as being equipped not only with two barns and two gardens but with two orchards (*duobus pomariis*) as well. New Place had been built by Sir Hugh Clopton about a hundred years earlier and was described by Leland in the middle of the sixteenth century as 'a praty howse of brike and tymbar', though shortly afterwards it was 'in great ruyne and decay'. Shakespeare did not settle there permanently until 1610, though on February 4th, 1598, he is described as a householder in Chapel Street ward, and the owner of ten quarters of corn or malt. There was at this time a shortage of corn owing to a series of wet summers, the effect of which Shakespeare describes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream:*

> Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
> As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
> Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
> Have every pelting river made so proud,
> That they have overborne their continents:
> The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
> The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
> Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard.

In order to prevent the hoarding of corn the Privy Council ordered stocks to be sold in the open market and an inventory to be made. Shakespeare may have been, in the words of the Council, one of the 'wycked people in condicions more lyke to wolves or cormerants than to naturell men', though as he was almost certainly in London at the time he may have known nothing about the matter.[1] Perhaps the engrosser was Thomas Greene, who claimed to be Shakespeare's cousin and was living at New Place in 1609.

It was probably William who persuaded his father to try to recover his mother's Wilmcote property which had been mortgaged to Edmund Lambert in 1578. John Shakespeare had tried to recover it on Edmund's death in 1587 when it had passed to his son John, and in 1597 he made a further attempt by bringing a suit in Chancery.

Further evidence of his renewed intimacy with Stratford is contained in the correspondence of Richard Quiney, the son and partner of Adrian Quiney, a mercer of Stratford, and the father of Thomas Quiney, who in 1616 married Shakespeare's daughter Judith. On

[1] See Abraham Sturley's letter, dated 24 Jan. 1598, to Richard Quiney, who was then in London.

January 24th, 1598, Abraham Sturley, a brother member of the town Corporation, wrote, at the instigation of Adrian Quiney, to Richard who was in London, suggesting that he might interest Shakespeare in 'our tithes':

> This is one speciall remembrance from vr fathers motion. It semeth bj him that our countriman, Mr Shaksper, is willinge to disburse some monei vpon some od yardeland or other att Shottri or neare about vs; he thinketh it a verj fitt patterne to move him to deale in the matter of our tithes. Bj the instruccions v can geve him theareof, and bj the frendes he can make therefore, we thinke it a faire marke for him to shoote att, and not unpossible to hitt. It obtained would advance him in deede, and would do vs muche good.

On November 4th, 1598, Sturley acknowledged a letter from Richard:

> Vr letter of the 25 of October came to mj handes the laste of the same att night per Grenwaj, which imported . . . that our countriman Mr Wm. Shak. would procure vs monej, which I will like of as I shall heare when, and wheare, and howe; and I praj let not go that occasion if it may sort to any indifferent condicions. Allso that if monej might be had for 30 or 40^{l}, a lease, &c., might be procured.

A few days before, Adrian had written to his son:

> Yff yow bargen with Mr Sha.. or receve money therfor, bringe your money home yf yow maye, I see howe knite stockynges be sold, ther ys gret byinge of them at Evysshome. Edward Wheat and Harrye, your brother man, were both at Evyshome thys daye senet, and, as I harde, bestow 20^{li}. ther in knyt hosseyngs, wherefore I thynke yow maye doo good, yff yow can have money.

Evidently Sturley and the Quineys were in need of ready money and looked to the prosperous owner of New Place to help them out of their difficulties. But the most interesting letter is that written by Richard to Shakespeare himself:

> Loveinge Contreyman, I am bolde of yowe as of a ffrende, craveinge yowre helpe with xxx^{li} vppon Mr Bushells & my securytee or Mr Myttons with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate & I have especiall cawse. Yowe shall ffrende me muche in helpeinge me out of all the debettes I owe in London, I thancke god, & muche quiet my mynde which wolde nott be indebeted. I am nowe towardes the Cowrte in hope of answer for the dispatche of my Buysenes. Yowe shall neither loase creddytt nor monnney by me, the Lorde wyllinge, & nowe butt

> perswade yowre selfe soe as I hope & yowe shall nott need to feare butt with all hartie thanckefullenes I will holde my tyme & content yowre ffrende, & yf we Bargaine farther yowe shalbe the paiemaster yowre self. My tyme biddes me hasten to an ende & soe I committ thys yowre care & hope of yowre helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yowe & with vs all Amen. ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane the 25 October 1598. Yowres in all kyndenes Ryc. Quyney.

The letter is addressed 'To my Loveinge good ffrend & countreymann Mr Wm. Shackespere'.

It was on the same day, October 25th, that Richard wrote to Sturley telling him that 'Mr Wm. Shak. would procure vs monej', and Sturley in his reply mentions £30 or £40, the sum that Richard had asked for. It seems probable that Shakespeare lost no time in answering his friend's request.

But though Shakespeare thus renewed his acquaintance with Stratford and restored the fortunes of his family, for the next fourteen or fifteen years he lived for most of the time in London. Some time before the end of 1597 he had been living in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, near The Theatre, for in the November of that year the petty collectors within the ward reported that William Shackspere owed 5s. and was one of the persons who

> are all ether dead, departed, and gone out of the sayde warde or their goodes soe eloigned or conveyd out of the same or in suche a pryvate or coverte manner kept, whereby the severall sommes of money on them severallye taxed and assessed towards the sayde secound payment of the sayde last subsydye nether mighte nor coulde by anye meanes by them the sayde petty collectors, or ether of them, be levyed of them, or anye of them, to her Maiesties use.

In October 1598 he was assessed, again in St. Helen's, at 13s. 4d. on goods valued at £5, but failed to pay when the sum was due a year later, and his name appears on the Pipe Roll of 1598-9 and 1599-1600 as debtor to the Exchequer for 13s. 4d. As the debt was then referred to the Bishop of Winchester, who was responsible for the collection of taxes in the liberty of the Clink on the Surrey Bankside, he seems to have moved across the river to Southwark some time before the end of 1599. The Globe theatre was built in Southwark on the Bankside in 1599, and it is possible that he moved in order to be near it. Malone in 1796 professed to have 'a curious document which affords the strongest presumptive evidence that he continued to reside in Southwark to the year 1608', though in 1604 Shakespeare



The Ryther Map of London, 1604 (?).

lodged for a time in the house of Christopher Mountjoy in Cripplegate ward. In the deposition of May 1612 in the Belott-Mountjoy suit he is described as 'William Shakespeare of Stratford vpon Aven in the Countye of Warwicke gentleman of the age of xlviij yeres or thereaboutes'.

This return to the scenes of his early life seems to have affected Shakespeare's imagination strongly, for all through the plays of this period run references to the Warwickshire and Gloucestershire countryside, their villages and inhabitants. A list of the plays probably written during this period (summer 1596 to the end of 1600) is suggestive:

Comedies: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.*
Histories: *King John, Henry IV Parts I and II, Henry V.*

There can be no doubt that Bottom and his friends are natives of Warwickshire, and that the fairy-haunted and moon-lit wood near Athens is the same as that frequented in daylight by Rosalind, Touchstone, and Jaques, and that both are identical with the Warwickshire Forest of Arden. The *Induction* to *The Taming of the Shrew*, which may belong to this period, introduces Christopher Sly, 'old Sly's son of Burtonheath, by present profession a tinker', and if we don't believe him he tells us to ask 'Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot', if she know him not. Barton on the Heath was the home of Shakespeare's uncle Edmund Lambert, and Wincot is a tiny hamlet four miles south of Stratford, near Quinton, where Sara, daughter of Robert Hacket, was baptised in November 1591. In the Second Part of *Henry IV* some of the best comedy in Shakespeare takes place in Justice Shallow's orchard on the Cotswolds. Justice Shallow himself may be Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, the reputed persecutor of Shakespeare for deer-stealing; Shallow mentions as one of the friends of his youth Will Squele, a Cotswold man, and is at first loath 'to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes of the Hill', a reference to the Vizars of Woodmancote and the Perkes family of the neighbouring Stinchcombe Hill on the edge of the south Cotswolds. Justice Shallow again appears as a figure of fun in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and it is his cousin Slender who asks Page, 'How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard he was outrun on Cotsall.' It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the plays of this period were partly inspired by a prolonged visit to Stratford in 1596.

Six years after Greene's malicious remarks about the upstart crow occurs a very different sort of reference to Shakespeare. On September

7th, 1598, a book called *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury* was entered in the Stationers' Register and published shortly afterwards. It was written by Francis Meres, a Cambridge graduate then living in London, and among other matter, literary and moral, contains 'A comparatiue discourse of our English poets with the *Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets*'. Of Shakespeare he writes:

> As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to liue in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* liues in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c.
>
> As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the* 2. *Richard* the 3. *Henry the* 4. *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Iuliet*.
>
> As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

Despite its preposterous pedantry this reference is invaluable as an aid in dating the plays, and interesting in that it shows that a man with some pretensions to be a judge ranked Shakespeare as the greatest English dramatist of the day.

Shakespeare worked very hard during these four years, 1597-1600, writing more than two plays a year in addition to his work as an actor. At the age of thirty-four he was according to Meres 'the most excellent in both kinds for the stage', and that his name carried weight is suggested by the publication with his name on the title-page of *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599; even as early as 1595 *The Tragedy of Locrine* was advertised as being by W.S., possibly with the intention of deluding the public into the belief that it was by Shakespeare. Again Rowe records the tradition that when Ben Jonson was 'altogether unknown to the World', it was Shakespeare who secured the acceptance of one of his plays after it had been rejected; and Shakespeare's name stands first in the list of actors who took part in the original production of *Every Man in his Humour* in 1598.

In that year the Chamberlain's Men were playing at The Curtain in Moorfields; for two years before that, and probably longer, they had been at The Theatre in Shoreditch, but it was in such bad repair that it was pulled down and its materials used by Cuthbert and Richard Burbage in the construction of the Globe on the Bankside, which

was opened in 1599. This remained their headquarters, though after their acquisition in 1608 of the Blackfriars, which had a roof and was therefore more suitable for winter performances, it lost some of its original importance. There is an informative statement by Cuthbert Burbage made in 1635 when he was engaged in litigation about his rights in the Globe and Blackfriars theatres:

> The father of vs Cutbert and Richard Burbage was the first builder of Playhowses, and was himselfe in his younger yeeres a Player. The Theater hee built with many Hundred poundes taken vp at interest. The players that liued in those first times had onely the proffits arising from the dores, but now the players receaue all the commings in at the dores to themselues and halfe the Galleries from the Houskepers. Hee built this house vpon leased ground, by which meanes the landlord and Hee had a great suite in law, and by his death, the like troubles fell on vs, his sonnes; wee then bethought vs of altering from thence, and at like expence built the Globe with more summes of money taken vp at interest, which lay heauy on vs many yeeres, and to our selues wee ioyned those deserueing men, Shakspere, Hemings, Condall, Philips and others partners in the profittes of that they call the House, but makeing the leases for twenty-one yeeres hath beene the destruction of our selues and others, for they dyeing at the expiration of three or four yeeres of their lease, the subsequent yeeres became dissolued to strangers, as by marrying with their widdowes, and the like by their Children. Thus, Right Honorable, as concerning the Globe, where wee our selues are but lessees. Now for the Blackfriers that is our inheritance, our father purchased it at extreme rates and made it into a playhouse with great charge and troble, which after was leased out to one Euans that first sett up the Boyes commonly called the Queenes Majesties Children of the Chappell. In processe of time the boyes growing vp to bee men, which were Vnderwood, Field, Ostler, and were taken to strengthen the Kings service, and the more to strengthen the service, the boyes dayly wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for our selues, and soe purchased the lease remaining from Euans with our money, and placed men Players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspeare, &c.

It is necessary to distinguish the actors, who were sharers in the net profits of the company, from the 'housekeepers', who were part-owners of the theatre for which the actors paid rent, and who were responsible for its upkeep. The patent of May 19th, 1603, when the Chamberlain's Men became the King's Men, gives nine actor-sharers, though it is probable that the position of Lawrence Fletcher, who had been 'comediane serviture' to James in Scotland, was only honorary:

> Wee..doe licence and aucthorize theise our Seruantes Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustyne Phillippes, Iohn Heninges, Henrie Condell, William Sly, Robert Armyn, Richard Cowly, and the rest of theire Associates freely to vse and exercise the Arte and faculty of playing Comedies, Tragedies, histories, Enterludes, moralls, pastoralls, Stageplaies and Suche others like as theie haue alreadie studied or hereafter shall vse or studie aswell for the recreation of our lovinge Subjectes as for our Solace and pleasure when wee shall thincke good to see them duringe our pleasure.

Some of the actor-sharers were also housekeepers, for when the Globe was built Richard and Cuthbert Burbage kept a half interest in it for themselves, and divided the other half among Shakespeare, Phillips, Pope, Heminge, and Kempe. This is made clear in a statement by Heminge and Condell during a lawsuit of 1619:

> The said gardens and groundes wherevpon the said playhowse & galleryes were afterwardes builded were demised & letten by the said Nicholas Brend by his indenture of lease tripartite bearing date in or about the xxjth day of February in the xljth yeere of the raigne of the late Queene Elizabeth vnto Cuthbert Burbadge, Richard Burbadge, William Shakespeare, the said Augustine Phillipps, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges one of the said defendantes, and William Kempe, to have and to hould the one moitie of the said garden plottes and ground to the said Cuthbert Burbadge and Richard Burbadge, their executours, administratours & assignes, from the feast of the birth of our Lord God last past before the date of the said indenture vnto thend & terme of xxxj yeeres from thence next ensuing for the yeerely rent of seaven poundes & five shillinges, and to haue & to hould thother moitie of the said garden plottes & groundes vnto the said William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillipps, Thomas Pope, the said John Heminges one of the said defendantes, & William Kempe, their executours, administratours & assignes, from the said feast of the birth of our Lord God then last past before the date of the said indenture vnto the said full end & terme of xxxj yeeres from thence next ensuing for the like yeerely rent of seaven poundes & five shillinges. Which said William Shakespeare, Augustine Phillipps, Thomas Pope, John Heminges & William Kempe did shortlie after graunte & assigne all the said moitie of & in the said gardens & groundes vnto William Levison and Thomas Savage, who regraunted & reassigned to euerye of them seuerally a fift parte of the said moitie of the said gardens & groundes, vpon which premisses or some part thereof there was shortly after built the said then playhowse.

In 1599, therefore, the two Burbages held half of the shares in the Globe between them, and Shakespeare had a tenth; Kempe left the company in the same year, so that Shakespeare then held an eighth,

though this was reduced to a fourteenth by the entry of Condell, Sly, and Ostler between 1605 and 1612. In the Blackfriars, according to the original lease of August 9th, 1608, he held a seventh of the shares, which after the death of Sly in that year became a sixth, but reverted to a seventh on the entry of Ostler in 1611. There is no mention of these shares in Shakespeare's will, and it is possible that he sold them on his retirement or after the fire at the Globe in 1613.

Sir Sidney Lee calculated that 'Shakespeare in the latter period of his life was earning above £600 a year in money of the period', but Sir Edmund Chambers has shown that this is a great over-estimate. From statements made in the Burbage suit of 1635 he estimates that if Shakespeare had been at that date an actor-sharer and a housekeeper both at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres his total profits would have been about £205. It is improbable that Shakespeare ever made more than this, and it might often be considerably less, for owing to the plague the London theatres were shut and the players forced to travel for the last three months of 1605, the last half of 1606 and of 1607, and from August 1608 to November 1609. Shakespeare may have given up acting soon after the accession of James I, for although he heads the list of 'The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes' prefixed to the First Folio,[1] the last record of his performing is late in 1603, when he played in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*. If so, and he continued to draw his profit as an actor-sharer, it was probably in return for the plays with which he supplied the company. Nevertheless, Shakespeare was a comparatively wealthy man; by 1600 his income may well have been the equivalent of £1,000 to £1,500 in our money, and ten years later £1,500 to £2,000.

1600-1609

The turn of the century is also a turning point in Shakespeare's career as a dramatist: the carefree comedies cease abruptly and the great series of tragedies begins, quietly enough, with *Julius Cæsar*

[1] William Shakespeare.
Richard Burbadge.
John Hemmings.
Augustine Phillips.
William Kempt.
Thomas Poope.
George Bryan.
Henry Condell.
William Slye.
Richard Cowly.
John Lowine.
Samuell Crosse.
Alexander Cooke.
Samuel Gilburne.
Robert Armin.
William Ostler.
Nathan Field.
John Vnderwood.
Nicholas Tooley.
William Ecclestone.
Joseph Taylor.
Robert Benfield.
Robert Goughe.
Richard Robinson.
Iohn Shancke.
Iohn Rice.

in 1600,[1] running with mounting violence through the cynicism of *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*, is interrupted by the sombre comedies of *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*, and then bursts into the despair and misanthropy of *Othello*, *Timon*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, the violent passion ebbing in the great golden flood of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the chilly *Coriolanus* with which the series closes in 1608.

Of Shakespeare's inner life we know only the little that we think we can discover in his works, which are symptoms of his spiritual condition, not the cause; and there are no external events which we can assign as a sufficient reason for the profound emotional upheaval of these years. There was one event, however, of the time when he began to write *Hamlet*, which may have powerfully affected him; this was the rebellion and execution of Essex for treason in February 1601. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, was a favourite of Elizabeth, but a vain and ambitious young man engaged in the intrigues as to who should succeed the ageing Queen on her death. Opposed to him was Cecil and his faction who trapped him into accepting the Lord-Deputyship of Ireland with the unenviable task of putting down Tyrone's rebellion, and after some delay he made a spectacular departure from London in March 1599 with Shakespeare's patron, Southampton, as his Master of Horse.

At this time Shakespeare was finishing *Henry V*, in the Chorus to the last Act of which he compares Henry's return to England from France with the expected return of Essex from Ireland:

> As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit,
> To welcome him!

Essex, however, did not bring home rebellion broached on his sword; instead he made a disastrous truce with Tyrone, lost his nerve, and fled to England, where on September 28th he burst into the Queen's room and threw himself upon her mercy. But Elizabeth did not forgive him; he was a discredited and ruined man, and became thenceforth the rallying point of other malcontents. The Council was alarmed and demanded an explanation; this forced Essex's hand, and on February 8th, 1601, he led his small band of supporters, South-

[1] *Julius Cæsar* may have been written in 1599 after *Henry V*, to which it has stylistic resemblances, and before *Much Ado*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, or in 1600, after these comedies and immediately before *Hamlet*, with which it has affinities of characterisation.

ampton among them, into the City, hoping to raise the citizens and train-bands; but few followed him, and he was forced to surrender. Essex and Southampton were brought to trial on February 19th and both were condemned to death. Essex was executed on February 25th; Southampton was spared because 'the poor young earl, merely for the love of Essex, had been driven into this action', but he was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The intensity of the effect of this disaster on Shakespeare would depend on his relations with Southampton. Southampton was the patron to whom he had dedicated his poems seven or eight years before; he may have helped Shakespeare financially, and he may have been the inspirer of the Sonnets; but there is no certain evidence to show that there was any great intimacy between them. If their relationship were merely the conventional one of patron and client, Shakespeare might not be greatly moved, but if Southampton were the Mr. W.H. of the *Sonnets*, Shakespeare must have watched his friend's perilous progress with something like despair. That he disapproved is certain, and both *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida* left no doubt as to which side he was on:

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason can but peep to what it would,
> Acts little of his will,

and,

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And, hark, what discord follows!

There was a curious incident on the day before the rising. Essex's supporters paid forty shillings to Shakespeare's company for a performance at the Globe of *Richard II*, and warmly applauded the scene of Richard's deposition. At the trial Augustine Phillips was called upon to explain the circumstances of the revival:

> The Examination of Augustyne Phillypps servant vnto the L Chamberlayne and one of hys players taken the xviijth of Februarij 1600 vpon hys oth.
>
> He sayeth that on Fryday last was sennyght or Thursday Sr Charles Percy Sr Josclyne Percy and the L. Montegle with some thre more spak to some of the players in the presans of thys examinate to have the play of the desposyng and kyllyng of Kyng Rychard the second to be played the Saterday next promysyng to gete them xl*s*. more then their ordynary to play yt. Wher thys Examinate and hys fellowes were determyned to have played some other play, holdyng that play of Kyng Richard to be so old & so long out of vse as that they shold have small

> or no Company at yt. But at their request this Examinate and his fellowes were Content to play yt the Saterday and had their xl*s*. more then their ordynary for yt and so played yt accordyngly.

It is curious that no proceedings were taken against the company, and on February 24th, the day before Essex's execution, they even played before Elizabeth at Whitehall.

The accession of James I in the spring of 1603 brought preferment and further prosperity to Shakespeare and his company, who were licensed by royal letters patent 'freely to vse and exercise the Arte and faculty of playing'—that is, to act in any town or university, a privilege that had previously been denied and one that they quickly exercised, for the first Quarto of *Hamlet*, 1603, states that the play 'hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford'.[1] Henceforth they were to be known as the King's Company, though still under the immediate control of the Lord Chamberlain—from 1603 to 1614 Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk—and its members ranked as Grooms of the Chamber. In 1604 they walked in scarlet cloaks in the procession when the king made his formal entry into London:

> Red Clothe bought of sondrie persons and giuen by his Maiestie to diuerse persons against his Maiesties sayd royall proceeding through the Citie of London, viz:—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Fawkeners &c. &c. | Red cloth |
> | William Shakespeare | iiij yardes di. |
> | Augustine Phillipps[2] | ,, |
> | Lawrence Fletcher | ,, |
> | John Hemminges | ,, |
> | Richard Burbidge | ,, |
> | William Slye | ,, |
> | Robert Armyn | ,, |
> | Henry Cundell | ,, |
> | Richard Cowley | ,, |

In the winter of 1604-5 they performed eleven times at Court, and most of the plays were by Shakespeare: *Othello*, *Merry Wives*, *Measure*

[1] The plague, from which London had been free for ten years, broke out in the spring of 1603 and lasted till that of 1604. The theatres were closed, and the King's Men had to travel.

[2] Augustine Phillips died in 1605 and left 'amongste the hyred men of the Company which I am of . . . the some of fyfe pounds of lawfull money of England to be equally distributed amongeste them, Item I geve and bequeathe to my Fellowe William Shakespeare a thirty shillings peece in gould . . .'.

for Measure, *Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V*, and *The Merchant of Venice* (twice).

James's accession also brought the release of Southampton from the Tower, and it is possible that Sonnet 107 refers to the death of Elizabeth, 'the mortal moon', to the peaceful accession of James in 'this most balmy time', and the release of Southampton, 'forfeit to a confined doom'. But the tone of the poem is at odds with that of the plays of this period, and also with that of the period itself. The heroic days of Elizabeth were over, and a conceited and cowardly king sat on the throne surrounded by a drunken and profligate court. 'I think the Dane hath strangely wrought on our good English nobles', wrote Sir John Harrington, 'for those, whom I could never get to taste good liquor, now follow the fashion, and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication.' They were sombre and inglorious years, and no doubt intensified Shakespeare's tragic mood, but in themselves they are insufficient to account for the plays: the real cause is not written in the history of the times, but in the intimate history of Shakespeare's life.

His father, John Shakespeare, died in 1601 and was buried at Stratford on September 8th: 'a merry Cheekd old man that said, Will was a good Honest Fellow but he durst have crackt a jeast with him at any time'. There is no record of a will, but his sole remaining property, the two houses in Henley St., passed to Shakespeare, though his widow lived in one of them until her death in 1608.

Shakespeare was now the head of his family, and although his two younger brothers, Gilbert and Richard, were living in Stratford, there were also four women for whom he was responsible: his mother, his wife, and his two daughters, Susanna and Judith. No doubt it was largely owing to this responsibility that he began to take a greater interest in the affairs of his native town and at the same time to loosen his ties with London, for if, as seems probable, he abandoned his acting about 1604 and concentrated on writing, he would be more the master of his time and able to divide it much as he pleased between London and Stratford.

In 1602, shortly after his father's death, he bought from William and John Combe for £320 a hundred and seven acres of arable land and twenty acres of pasture and rights of common in the open fields near Welcome just to the north of Stratford:

> This Indenture made the firste daie of Maye, in the fowre and fortieth yeare of the raigne of our Soueraigne Ladie Elizabeth..Betweene William Combe of Warrwicke, in the countie of Warrwick,

> Esquier, and John Combe of Olde Stretford, in the countie aforesaide, gentleman, on the one partie, And William Shakespere of Stretford vppon Avon, in the countie aforesaide, gentleman, on thother partye, Witnesseth that the saide William Combe and John Combe, for and in consideracion of the somme of three hundred and twentie poundes of currant Englishe money . . . have aliened, bargayned, solde, geven, graunted and confirmed, and by theis presentes doe fullye, clearlie and absolutelie alien, bargayne, sell, give, graunte and confirme vnto the saide William Shakespeare, All and singular those errable landes, with thappurtenaunces, conteyninge by estymacion fowre yarde lande of errable lande, scytuate, lyinge and beinge within the parrishe, feildes or towne of Olde Stretford aforesaide, in the said countie of Warrwick, conteyninge by estimacion one hundred and seaven acres, be they more or lesse, And also all the common of pasture for sheepe, horse, kyne or other cattle in the feildes of Olde Stretford aforesaide, to the said fowre yarde lande belonginge or in any wise apperteyninge, And also all hades, leys, tyinges, proffittes, advantages and commodities whatsoeuer, with their and euerie of their appurtenaunces, to the saide bargayned premisses belonging or apperteyninge.

The deed was 'Sealed and deliuered to Gilbert Shakespere, to the vse of the within named William Shakespere'. The 'hades, leys, tyinges' may be the 'viginti acris pasture' mentioned with the 'centum et septum acris terre' in a supplementary conveyance of 1610, or the twenty acres of pasture may have been a new purchase.

In the same year, on September 28th, Shakespeare bought from Walter Getley a cottage opposite the garden of New Place in Chapel Lane, otherwise called Dead Lane or Walker's Street:

> Ad hanc curiam venit Walterus Getley . . et sursumreddidit in manus domine manerii predicti vnum cotagium cum pertinenciis scituatum iacens et existens in Stratford super Avon, in quondam vico ibidem vocato Walkers Streete alias Dead Lane, ad opus et vsum Willielmi Shackespere . .

The cottage was within the Manor of Rowington, a Survey of which states that in October 1604,

> William Shakespere lykewise holdeth there one cottage and one garden, by estimation a quarter of one acre, and payeth rent yeerlye ij^{s}, vj^{d}.

It was in Stratford that Shakespeare brought an action in 1604 against Philip Rogers, an apothecary, to whom he had lent 2*s.* and supplied malt to the value of £1 19*s.* 10*d.* Rogers repaid 6*s.* and

Shakespeare sued him for the balance of £1 15*s.* 10*d.* Again in March 1609 the Stratford Court of Record issued a precept to arrest and produce John Addenbrooke

> ad satisfaciendum Willielmo Shackspere generoso, tam de sex libris debiti quas predictus Willielmus in eadem curia versus eum recuperavit quam de viginti et quatuor solidis qui ei adiudicati fuerent pro dampnis et custagiis suis quos sustinuit occacione detencionis debiti predicti.

But Addenbrooke was not to be found: 'Infranominatus Johannes non est inventus infra libertatem hujus burgi', and Shakespeare had to proceed against his surety, Thomas Horneby, for the recovery of his £6 and 24*s.* costs.

As early as 1598 Abraham Sturley had written to Richard Quiney suggesting that as 'our countriman, Mr Shaksper, is willinge to disburse some monei vpon some od yardeland or other att Shottri or neare about vs' it might be 'a verj fitt patterne to move him to deale in the matter of our tithes'. Four years later Shakespeare bought 'some od yardeland att Shottri or neare', and in 1605 he paid £440 for the lease of a parcel of tithes in the hamlets of Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton:

> This indenture nowe witnesseth that the sayed Raphe Hubande, for and in consideracion of the somme of foure hundred and fourtye poundes of lawfull Englishe money to him by the sayed William Shakespear, . . . hathe demised, graunted, assigned and sett over . . . vnto the sayed William Shakespear . . . the moytie or one half of all and singuler the sayed tythes of corne, grayne, blade and heye, yearelye and from tyme to tyme cominge . . . in the townes, villages, hamlettes, groundes and fyeldes of Stratforde, Olde Stratforde, Welcombe, and Bushopton . . . and alsoe the moytie or one half of all and singuler the sayed tythes of wooll, lambe, and other smalle and pryvie tythes, herbage, oblacions, obvencions, alterages, mynumentes and offeringes whatsoeuer, yearelye and from tyme to tyme cominge . . . within the parishe of Stratforde vpon Avon aforesayed.

In return for his profits from the tithes, which in 1611 were valued at £60 a year, Shakespeare was to pay

> vnto the baylyffe and burgesses of Stratford aforesaid, and their successors, the yearelye rent of seaventeen poundes . . . and vnto the sayed John Barker, his executours, administratours or assignes, the annual or yearelye rente of fyve pounds.

This last clause led in 1611 to a complaint by Shakespeare and two

other holders of the same parcel of tithes, Richard Lane and Thomas Greene, that Mary, William, and John Combe, 'or some or one of them', fellow tithe-owners, were not paying their share of the total mean rent of £27 13*s.* 4*d.* due to Barker. As Barker had the right of re-entry in default of the payment of this rent 'in parte or in all', this meant that

> Richard Lane and William Shackspeare, and some fewe others of the said parties, are wholly, and against all equity and good conscience, usually dryven to pay the same for preservacion of their estates.

William Combe replied that he did pay his £5 but was willing to pay another 6*s.* 8*d.* for other tithes, provided all the other parties paid their share. Incidentally, John Combe, William's uncle, was the 'old rich Usurer' of Aubrey and others, upon whom Shakespeare was said to have made the 'extemporary Epitaph': 'Ten in the Hundred the Devill allowes But Combes will have twelve', etc. The story is almost certainly apocryphal, for versions of this epitaph were common, and when John Combe died in 1614 he left Shakespeare £5.

There are a number of entries in the Register of Stratford parish church which sketch the history of Shakespeare's family during this period:

1600, Aug. 28. C. Wilhelmus filius Wilhelmi Hart.
1601, Sept. 8. B. Mr Johannes Shakspeare.
1603, June. 5. C. Maria filia Wilhelmi Hart.
1605, July. 24. C. Thomas fil. Wilhelmus Hart Hatter.
1607, June. 5. M. John Hall gentleman & Susanna Shaxspere.
1607, Dec. 17. B. Mary dawghter to Willyam Hart.
1608, Feb. 21. C. Elizabeth dawghter to John Hall gentleman.
1608, Sept. 9. B. Mayry Shaxspere, wydowe.
1608, Sept. 23. C. Mychaell sonne to Willyam Hart.

And then in London, first in the Register of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, then in that of St. Saviour's, Southwark, occur the entries:

1607, Aug. 12. B. Edward sonne of Edward Shackspeere, Player: base-borne.
1607, Dec. 31. B. Edmond Shakespeare, a player: in the Church.

William Hart, of whom nothing is known save that he was a hatter, married Shakespeare's sister Joan, but there is no record of their marriage. Joan was thirty-one in 1600 when her first child was born. She was living in the 'Birthplace' in 1616, and her descendants

by her third child Thomas occupied the house until 1806, when it was sold and became a butcher's shop.

In 1607 Shakespeare's elder daughter Susanna was married to Dr John Hall, and in the following year his only grandchild, Elizabeth, was born. John Hall was a successful physician who lived in Old Stratford and cured Mr Drayton, 'an excellent poet', of a fever by an infusion of violets, and his wife who was 'miserably tormented with the collick', and daughter who 'was vexed with *Tortura Oris*' by what appear to have been more drastic methods. It seems probable that he had puritanical leanings, though even 'such as hated his religion' made use of his skill.

In the same year, a plague year in London, Shakespeare's youngest brother Edmund was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, his funeral 'with a forenoon knell of the great bell' costing twenty shillings, which Shakespeare may have paid. Edmund was only twenty-seven when he died, a London actor but apparently not one of the King's Men, and the father of the illegitimate Edward who died shortly before him. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, died in 1608, and on September 9th was buried in Stratford churchyard.

1609-1616

Shakespeare must have been a very tired man in 1608 after the prolonged strain of the spiritual throes that produced the poetry and characters of the tragedies, and it is possible, as Sir Edmund Chambers suggests, that *Timon* and not *Coriolanus* is the last of the series, an abortive birth indicative of a nervous breakdown. If so the celestial music of the recognition scene in *Pericles*, which probably came next, may be the equivalent of Beethoven's *A minor quartet*, a thanksgiving on his recovery from illness. It may be so, but we do not know.

Nor do we know exactly when Shakespeare left London for Stratford. In 1599 he was living in Southwark in the Clink on the Bankside, and Malone claimed that 'he continued to reside in Southwark to the year 1608'. Unfortunately the evidence was never published, but there is a memorandum of September 9th, 1609, by Thomas Greene, Shakespeare's 'cousin', fellow tithe-owner, and town clerk of Stratford, in which he says, with reference to some delay in the delivery of a house, 'I was content to permytt it without contradiccion & the rather because I perceyued I mighte staye another yere at newe place'. We do not know how long Greene had been living at New Place, but he certainly suggests that he expects to be there until September 1610. He did in fact buy another house about May 1611.

The years 1605-1609 were plague years in London, and it is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare, having worked out the tragic themes, seen his company occupy the Blackfriars theatre in the autumn of 1609, and having no acting ties to restrain him, would be anxious to escape from the plague to his house in Stratford and the companionship of his wife, daughters, and granddaughter. Possibly, therefore, he left London for Stratford sometime in 1610 or 1611, though we cannot be certain that he was there before May 1612, when in his deposition in the Belott-Mountjoy suit he described himself as 'of Stratford vpon Aven in the Countye of Warwicke gentleman'.

The plays that follow the tragedies, *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, written between 1608 and 1611, are all comedies, but very different from the sparkling comedies of the pre-tragic period. They are romances of estrangement and reconciliation, as though the comic spirit had been touched by the tragic, and transmuted by the contact. It may be that Shakespeare was simply supplying the kind of play, the tragi-comedy, that was so popular at the court of James I and Anne of Denmark, and that was fully exploited by Beaumont and Fletcher. More probably it was the natural development of Shakespeare's genius which, after the tension and torment of the tragedies of character, turned with relief to the fantasy and pure poetry of romance.

Perhaps the inspiration came partly from Stratford and the surrounding countryside to which he was drawing ever closer, and it is not altogether fanciful to see in Marina, Imogen, Perdita, and Miranda the influence of his daughters and granddaughter; but it is possible to over-sentimentalise this final period and find only a 'grave serenity', 'a clear yet tender luminousness, not elsewhere to be found in his writings'. That there is this serenity, at least in *The Tempest*, and luminousness, cannot be denied, but it is not as simple as that. We tend to remember the restoration of Marina to Pericles, and the pastoral scenes of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, but to forget the brothel at Mytilene, yellow Iachimo, and 'the wretched fishing jealousies of Leontes'. What are we to make of Posthumus's speech?

> Is there no way for men to be, but women
> Must be half-workers? We are all bastards;
> And that most venerable man which I
> Did call my father, was I know not where
> When I was stamped; some coiner with his tools
> Made me a counterfeit;

and of those of Leontes?

> And many a man there is, even at this present,
> Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,
> And little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence
> And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by
> Sir Smile, his neighbour.

This is the language of Othello and Lear and Timon, the violent revulsion from sex which is almost the main theme of many of the tragedies, and here, as in them, seems far to outstrip the dramatic occasion. It is as though the tragic passion were not quite played out but were carried over into the romances, and serenity achieved only in the last play, *The Tempest.*

Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford did not mean a complete severance from London and the theatre. *The Tempest*, which he may have written at New Place, was for the King's Men, and he may have collaborated with Fletcher in 1612-13 in the writing of *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, though it is possible that Fletcher worked on material that Shakespeare left in London on his retirement —at least it is difficult to believe that Shakespeare knew much about Fletcher's unwholesome contribution to the latter play.

That Shakespeare's plays were popular is shown by the fact that in 1612-13, during the festivities in celebration of the marriage of James I's daughter Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine, John Heminge produced seven of them at Court:

> Item paid to John Heminges upon the Cowncells warrant dated att Whitehall xx° die Maij 1613, for presentinge before the Princes Highnes the Lady Elizabeth and the Prince Pallatyne Elector fowerteene severall playes, viz: one playe called Filaster, One other called the Knott of Fooles, One other Much Adoe abowte Nothinge, The Mayeds Tragedy, The Merye Dyvell of Edmonton, The Tempest, A Kinge and no Kinge, The Twins Tragedie, The Winters Tale, Sir John Falstaffe, The Moore of Venice, The Nobleman, Cæsars Tragedye, And one other callee Love lyes a bleedinge, All which Playes weare played with-in the tyme of this Accompte, viz: paid the some of iiij^{xx} xiij^{li} vj^{s} viij^{d}.
>
> Item paid to the said John Heminges vppon the lyke warrant, dated att Whitehall xx° die Maij 1613, for presentinge sixe severall playes, viz: one playe called A badd begininge makes a good endinge, One other called the Capteyne, One other the Alcumist, One other Cardenno, One other The Hotspur, And one other called Benedicte and Betteris, All played within the tyme of this Accompte viz: paid Fortie powndes. And by waye of his Majesties rewarde twentie powndes, In all lx^{li}.

A few months later, on June 29th, the Globe theatre was burned

to the ground 'while Burbage's company were acting the play of *Henry VIII*'. The most famous account is that of Sir Henry Wotton in a letter to Sir Edmund Bacon, quoted in full on p. 474:

> Now, King Henry making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain chambers being shot off at his entry, some of the paper, or other stuff, wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole house to the very grounds.

The theatre was rebuilt in 1614 'in far finer manner than before', and it is this Jacobean Globe depicted in Visscher's view of 1616 that has come to be accepted as the typical Elizabethan public theatre.

Shakespeare sometimes left Stratford for a visit to London, and it was there on May 11th, 1612, that he made his deposition in the Belott *v.* Mountjoy lawsuit. Stephen Belott had been the apprentice of the tire-maker Christopher Mountjoy who lived in Silver St. just to the north of St. Paul's. In 1604 he married his master's daughter Mary, and in 1612 brought a suit accusing Mountjoy of failing to provide his daughter with a promised dowry of £60 and a further £200 in his will. Joan Johnson, a maidservant of Mountjoy, deposed that Shakespeare, at Mountjoy's request, had helped to persuade Belott to marry Mary Mountjoy:

> And as she remembereth the defendant did send and perswade one Mr Shakespeare that lay in the house to perswade the plaintiff to the same marriadge.

Another deponent, Daniell Nicholas, stated that Belott asked him to go with his wife to Shakespeare

> to vnderstande the truthe howe muche and what the defendant did promise to bestowe on his daughter in marriadge with him the plaintiff, who did soe. And askinge Shakespeare thereof, he answered that he promissed yf the plaintiff would marrye with Marye his the defendantes onlye daughter, he the defendant would by his promise as he remembered geue the plaintiff with her in marriadge about the some of ffyftye poundes in money and certayne houshold stuffe.

Shakespeare admitted his part in the persuasion, but could not remember what Mountjoy had promised to settle on Mary.

> William Shakespeare of Stratford vpon Aven in the Countye of Warwicke gentleman of the age of xlviij yeres or thereaboutes sworne and examined the daye and yere abouesaid deposeth & sayethe

To the first interrogatory this deponent sayethe he knowethe the partyes plaintiff and deffendant and hathe knowne them bothe as he now remembrethe for the space of tenne yeres or thereaboutes . . .

To the third interrogatory this deponent sayethe . . . that the said deffendantes wyeffe did sollicitt and entreat this deponent to move and perswade the said complainant to effect the said marriadge, and accordingly this deponent did moue and perswade the complainant thervnto: And more to this interrogatorye he cannott depose.

To the ffourth interrogatory this deponent sayth that the defendant promissed to geue the said complainant a porcion in marriadg with Marye his daughter, but what certain porcion he rememberethe not, nor when to be payed, nor knoweth that the defendant promissed the plaintiff twoe hundered poundes with his daughter Marye at the tyme of his decease . . .

To the vth interrogatory this deponent sayth he can saye nothing touchinge any parte or poynte of the same interrogatory, for he knoweth not what implementes and necessaries of houshold stuffe the defendant gaue the plaintiff in marriadge with his daughter Marye.

Willm Shaksp

From this it appears that Shakespeare had lodged with Mountjoy some time between 1602 when he first met him and November 1604 when Belott married Mary. His evidence was not very helpful, but there seems no good reason why he should have remembered the details of an arrangement made some eight years before. Or it may be that he did not wish to be involved in the affairs of the Mountjoy family, who were described 'tous 2 pere & gendre desbauchéz'; or, again, it is possible that his memory really was beginning to fail him.

Shakespeare had always been interested in heraldry, and it was in London, presumably, that he helped Burbage, who was an amateur painter, to devise an 'impresa' for the Earl of Rutland to bear on his shield in the tournament at Whitehall on the anniversary of the King's accession on March 24th, 1613. An impresa was a heraldic device of Italian origin combining allegorical pictures and mottoes, and used to adorn not only shields but sometimes also furniture and plate. According to the account book of Rutland's steward, Shakespeare received 44*s.* for his design, and Burbage the same sum for painting it:

Item, 31 Martii, to Mr Shakspeare in gold about my Lorde's impreso, xliiij^{s}; to Richard Burbage for paynting and making yt, in gold xliiij^{s}.

It was during this visit to London that, on March 10th, 1613, Shakespeare invested £140 in the purchase of a building that had once

been the gate-house to the lodging of the Prior of Blackfriars, situated between St. Paul's and the present Blackfriars Bridge:

> This Indenture made the tenthe day of Marche (1613) . . . Between Henry Walker citizein and Minstrell of London of th'one partie; And William Shakespeare of Stratford Vpon Avon in the countie of Warwick gentleman, William Johnson, citizein and Vintener of London, John Jackson and John Hemmyng of London gentlemen, of th'other partie; Witnesseth that the said Henry Walker (for and in consideracion of the somme of one hundred and fortie poundes of lawfull money of England to him in hande before th'ensealing hereof by the said William Shakespeare well & trulie paid . . .) hath bargayned and soulde and by theis presentes doth fullie, cleerlie, and absolutlie bargayne and sell vnto the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson, and John Hemming, their heirs and assignes forever; All that dwelling house or Tenement with th'appurtenaunces situate and being within the Precinct, circuit and compasse of the late black Fryers London . . . abutting vpon a streete leading down to Pudle wharffe on the east part, right against the Kinges Maiesties Wardrobe; part of which said Tenement is erected over a great gate leading to a capitall Mesuage . .; And also all that plott of ground on the west side of the same Tenement which was lately inclosed with boordes on two sides thereof by Anne Bacon widowe, soe farre and in such sorte as the same was inclosed by the said Anne Bacon, and not otherwise, and being on the thirde side inclosed with an olde Brick wall; . . and also the soyle wherevppon the said Tenement standeth; And also the said Brick wall and boordes which do inclose the said plott of ground . . . In witnesse whereof the said parties to theis Indentures interchaungablie have sett their seales. Yeoven the day and yeares first above written.
>
> William Shakspẽ Wm Johnsonn Jo: Jacksonn.

The next day, March 11th, Shakespeare mortgaged the house temporarily to the former owner for £60, apparently as security against the payment of the balance of the purchase money:

> This Indenture made the eleaventh day of March . . : Witnesseth that the said William Shakespeare, William Johnson, John Jackson and John Hemmyng, have dimised, graunted and to ferme letten . . . vnto the said Henry Walker, All that dwelling house or Tenement, with th'appurtenaunces, situate and being within the precinct, circuit and compasse of the late Black Fryers, London . . . Yeelding and paying therefore . . . a pepper corne at the feast of Easter yearlie, if the same bee lawfullie demaunded, and noe more. Prouided alwayes that if the said William Shakespeare, his heires, executours, administratours or assignes, or any of them, doe well and trulie paie or cause to bee paid to

> the said Henry Walker . . . the some of threescore poundes of lawfull money of England in and vpon the nyne and twentith day of September next . . . That then and from thensforth this presente lease shall cease . Wm Shakspe, Wm Johnson, Jo: Jackson.

As it was Shakespeare who paid the money for the house it is clear that Johnson, Jackson, and Heminge were acting merely as trustees; but the effect of this form of conveyance was, whether deliberately or not, to deprive his wife of her legal dower of a life interest in the property. Shakespeare signed both the deed of conveyance and of mortgage, and these two signatures, the three of his will, and that of his deposition in the Belott-Mountjoy suit form the only handwriting that we can be certain is his, though on them rests the greater part of the case in favour of his having written three pages of the manuscript play *Sir Thomas More*.

Shakespeare was in London again in November 1614, apparently with his son-in-law John Hall, for Thomas Greene who was already there made a note of his arrival and of the ensuing interview:

> Jovis 17 No. At my Cosen Shakspeare commyng yesterday to towne I went to see him howe he did he told me that they assured him they ment to inclose no further then to gospell bushe & so vpp straight (leaving out part of the dyngles to the ffield) to the gate in Clopton hedge & take in Salisburyes peece: and that they meane in Aprill to servey the Land & then to gyve satisfaccion & not before & he & Mr Hall say they think there will be nothyng done at all.

This is the Thomas Greene who was the town clerk of Stratford and living at New Place in 1609, though what his relationship was to Shakespeare that he should call him 'cosen' is not at all clear. The reason for his presence in London is clear enough, however. In the autumn of that year, 1614, two owners of land in the neighbourhood of Stratford, Arthur Mainwaring and William Replingham, set on foot proceedings for the enclosure of certain fields in Old Stratford and Welcombe. The Stratford Corporation, as the owners of tithes that were likely to fall in value if arable land were put down to grass, sent Greene to London to dissuade the promoters and to petition the Privy Council. He was at Stratford again in December, for on the 10th he wrote that the survey had already been made and that he had tried to find Replingham 'at the beare & at new place but myssed him & . . . he was not to be spoken with'. On the 23rd the town council appealed to Mainwaring and Shakespeare, and Greene notes:

> Lettres wrytten one to Mr Mannerying another to Mr Shakspeare with almost all the companyes hands to eyther: I alsoe wrytte of myself

> to my Cosen Shakespeare the Coppyes of all our oathes made then alsoe a not of the Inconvenyences wold grow by the Inclosure.

At about this time William Combe, who held land in Welcombe, joined the promoters of the scheme and in January set his men to begin the enclosure by digging a ditch, but was stopped by an order of the Warwick Assizes after some interference by the Stratford Corporation and the local inhabitants. Combe made further proposals but the Corporation continued its opposition and the enclosure was successfully stayed.

It is difficult to say what was Shakespeare's attitude to the proposed enclosure. None of his estate in Old Stratford would have been affected, but like the Corporation he might have suffered loss by a fall in the value of his tithes. Against this, however, he had secured himself by an agreement with Replingham on October 28th:

> The said William Replingham . . . doth covenaunte . . . with the said William Shackespeare . . . That he . . . shall, uppon reasonable request, satisfie, content and make recompence unto him . . . for all such losse, detriment and hinderance as he, the said William Shackespeare, his heires and assignes, and one Thomas Greene, gent., shall or maye be thought, in the viewe and judgement of foure indifferent persons . . . to sustayne or incurre for or in respecte or the decreasing of the yearlie value of the tythes they . . . doe joyntlie or seuerallie hold and enioy in the said fieldes . . . by reason of anie inclosure or decaye of tyllage there ment and intended by the said William Replingham.

Shakespeare could therefore view the affair disinterestedly. Enclosure of the open fields for arable purposes would mean better agriculture, but if, as was most probable, arable were converted into pasture it would mean unemployment and depopulation, and if common and waste were also enclosed it would mean further distress owing to the loss of grazing and other rights. The proposal was unpopular and no doubt inspired by selfish motives, but whether Shakespeare supported the conservative Corporation and the people or the enterprising Combe, who maintained that it would not harm the town, and indeed in 1616 offered compensation for loss, it is difficult to say. But the Council's letters to Mainwaring and Shakespeare suggest that either he remained neutral in the matter or supported enclosure, though we cannot say for certain, as his correspondence with the Council has been lost.

Wherever his sympathies lay there is no reason to think that he took a more active part in the enclosure controversy than he did in the affairs of the town. He was undoubtedly one of the leading bur-

gesses of Stratford, and might, had he so wished, have been one of the leading members of the Corporation, but unlike his father he seems to have had no taste for local politics, and the few records that we have of his doings are of an unofficial though public-spirited nature. In September 1611 he was one of seventy-two contributors 'towardes the charge of prosecutyng the Bill in parliament for the better Repayre of the highe waies and amendinge diuers defectes in the Statutes alredy made', and in 1614 he entertained on behalf of the Corporation a visiting preacher with 'one quart of sack and one quart of clarrett winne at the newe place'.

His youngest brother Edmund had died in London in 1607, and soon after his retirement his two other brothers died in Stratford:

1612, Feb. 3. B. Gilbert Shakspere, adolescens.
1613, Feb. 4. B. Rich: Shakspeare.

Gilbert was forty-five and Richard thirty-eight, and both appear to have been unmarried. Of Richard nothing more is known; Gilbert acted as agent for the poet when he bought the land from the Combes in 1602. The description 'adolescens' is a little puzzling, and it used to be thought that it was a reference to a son of Gilbert, and that Gilbert senior was the 'younger brother' described by Oldys 'who lived to a good old age' and went to see his 'brother Will' act in London. On the other hand, Capell in his version of the tradition is less precise and refers to the visitor from Stratford merely as a man 'related to Shakespeare', and as there are no records of Gilbert's marriage or of the baptism of a son, and as he is not mentioned in Shakespeare's will, it seems certain that 'Gilbert Shakspere, adolescens' was the poet's bachelor brother. On April 17th, 1616, a week before his own death, his brother-in-law 'Will. Hartt, hatter', the husband of his only surviving sister Joan, was buried at Stratford.

His daughters must have caused Shakespeare some anxiety at this time. In 1613 Susanna, a married woman of thirty, was accused by a certain John Lane of Stratford of having 'bin naught with Rafe Smith', a local hatter. In July she brought an action for slander against Lane, who failed to appear before the court at Worcester and was excommunicated. Then in 1616, just about the time of his death, his other daughter Judith was herself excommunicated. The Stratford register records the marriage on February 10th of 'Tho Queeny tow Judith Shakspere'. As this took place within the prohibited period before Easter they should have obtained a special licence, but apparently they failed to do so, and were summoned before the ecclesiastical court at Worcester and excommunicated. Thomas Quiney was

the son of Richard Quiney, Shakespeare's friend and 'loveinge countreyman', and a Stratford wine merchant living at The Cage, a house in Bridge St.

In January 1616 Shakespeare prepared the first draft of his will, which was considerably revised and signed by him on March 25th, apparently in some haste, for no fair copy was made.

> In the name of god Amen I William Shackspeare of Stratford vpon Avon in the countie of Warr gent in perfect health & memorie god be praysed doe make & Ordayne this my last will & testament in manner & forme followeing. That is to saye ffirst I Comend my Soule into the handes of god my Creator, hoping & assuredlie beleeving through thonelie merittes of Jesus Christe my Saviour to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge, And my bodye to the Earth whereof yt ys made.
>
> Item I Gyve & bequeath vnto my daughter Judyth One Hundred and ffyftie poundes . . . One Hundred Poundes in discharge of her marriage porcion . . . & ffyftie poundes Residewe thereof vpon her Surrendring of . . . All her estate & Right . . . in or to one Copiehold tenemente . . . being parcell or holden of the mannour of Rowington, vnto my daughter Susanna Hall . . .
>
> Item I Gyve and bequeath vnto my saied daughter Judith One Hundred & ffyftie Poundes more if shee or Anie issue of her bodie be Lyvinge att thend of three Yeares . . . And if she dye within the saied terme without issue of her bodye then my will ys & I doe gyve and bequeath One Hundred Poundes thereof to my Neece Elizabeth Hall & the ffiftie Poundes to be sett fourth by my executours during the lief of my Sister Johane Harte & the vse & profitt thereof Cominge shalbe payed to my saied Sister Jone, & after her deceas the saied l^{li} shall Remaine Amongst the children of my saied Sister Equallie to be devided Amongst them. But if my saied daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saied three Yeares or anie yssue of her bodye, then my will ys &s oe I devise & bequeath the saied Hundred and ffyftie poundes to be sett out by my executours & overseers for the best benefitt of her & her issue & the stock not to be paied vnto her soe long as she shalbe marryed & covert Baron, but my will ys that she shall have the consideracion yearelie paied vnto her during her lief & after her deceas the saied stock and consideracion to bee paied to her children if she have Anie & if not to her executours or assignes she lyving the saied terme after my deceas. Provided that yf such husbond as she shall at thend of the saied three Yeares be marryed vnto or attaine after doe sufficientlie Assure vnto her & thissue of her bodie landes Awnswerable to the porcion by this my will gyven vnto her & to be adiudged soe by my executours & overseers then my will ys that the said cl^{li} shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance to his owne vse.
>
> Item I gyve & bequeath vnto ny saied sister Jone xx^{li} & all my wearing Apparrell. . . . And I doe will & devise vnto her the house with thap-

purtenaunces in Stratford wherein she dwelleth for her naturall lief vnder the yearelie Rent of xij^{d}.

Item I gyve and bequeath Vnto her three sonns Welliam Harte [Thomas] Hart & Michaell Harte ffyve poundes A peece. . . .

Item I gyve & bequeath vnto the saied Elizabeth Hall All my Plate (except my brod silver & gilt bole) . . .

Item I gyve & bequeath vnto the Poore of Stratford aforesaid tenn poundes, to mr Thomas Combe[1] my Sword, to Thomas Russell Esquier[2] ffyve poundes, & to ffrauncis Collins[3] of the Borough of Warr . . . gent thirteene poundes Sixe shillinges & Eight pence . . .

Item I gyve and bequeath to Hamlett Sadler[4] xxvj^{s} viij^{d} to buy him A Ringe, to my godson William Walker[5] xx^{s} in gold, to Anthonye Nashe[6] gent xxvj^{s} viij^{d}, & to Mr John Nashe[7] xxvj^{s} viij^{d}, & to my ffelowes John Hemynge Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell xxvj^{s} viij^{d} A peece to buy them Ringes.

Item I Gyve Will bequeath & Devise vnto my daughter Susanna Hall . . . All that Capitall Messuage or tenemente with thappurtenaunces in Stratford aforesaid Called the newe place wherein I nowe dwell & twoe messuages or tenementes with thappurtenaunces scituat lyeing & being in Henley streete within the borough of Stratford aforesaied, And all my barnes stables Orchardes gardens landes tenementes & hereditamentes whatsoever . . . within . . . Stratford vpon Avon Oldstratford Bushopton & Welcombe . . . And alsoe All that Messuage . . . wherein one John Robinson dwelleth scituat . . . in the blackfriers in London nere the Wardrobe, & all other my landes tenementes and hereditamentes whatsoever; To Have & to hold All & singuler the saied premisses with their Appurtennaunces vnto the saied Susanna Hall for & during the terme of her naturall lief, & after her Deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueing & to the heires Males of the bodie of the saied first Sonne lawfullie yssueing, & for defalt of such issue to the second Sonne . . . and to the heires Males . . . & for defalt of such heires to the third Sonne . . . and the heires Males . . . And for defalt of such issue . . . to the ffourth ffyfth sixte & Seaventh sonnes & to the heires Males . . . and for defalt of such issue the said premisses to be & Remaine to my sayed Neece Hall & the heires males of her bodie Lawfullie yssueing, and for defalt of issue to my daughter Judith & the heires Males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing, And for defalt of such issue to the Right heires of me the saied William Shackspere for ever.

[1] Thomas Combe: son of Thomas, nephew of John, the 'John o' Combe' of the 'extemporary epitaph', and younger brother of William, the encloser.

[2] Thomas Russell: possibly a local landowner.

[3] Francis Collins: the Warwick solicitor who probably drafted the will.

[4] Hamlett (or Hamnet) Sadler: with his wife Judith, probably godparents of Shakespeare's twin children.

[5] William Walker: probably the son of Henry Walker, a Stratford mercer and alderman.

[6, 7] Anthony and John Nash: father and uncle of Thomas Nash, the first husband of Shakespeare's granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Item I gyve vnto my wief my second best bed with the furniture.

Item I gyve & bequeath to my saied daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole.

All the Rest of my goodes chattels Leases plate Jewels & householde stuffe whatsoever, after my dettes and Legasies paied & my funerall expences discharged, I gyve devise & bequeath to my Sonne in Lawe John Hall gent & my daughter Susanna his wief whom I ordaine & make executours of this my Last will and testament. And I doe intreat & Appoint the saied Thomas Russell Esquier & ffrauncis Collins to be overseers hereof . . . In witnesse whereof I have hereunto put my hand the daie & Yeare first aboue Written.

By me William Shakspeare.[1]

Between the drafting of the will and its signing Judith had married Thomas Quiney, possibly also been excommunicated, and it may be significant that most of the alterations concern her portion, which is so carefully secured as to suggest that Shakespeare was uncertain about his new son-in-law. No doubt all his 'wearing Apparrell', which he left to his sister Joan, was really intended for her husband William Hart who was, except for his cousin John Lambert, the only surviving near relation old enough to wear it, but he died between the signing of the will and Shakespeare's death. His wife Anne would receive her widow's dower of a third share for life in freehold estate, and possibly a similar share in personal property; the 'second-best bed' would have a high sentimental value.

According to the inscription in his monument in Stratford church Shakespeare died on April 23rd, 1616, in his fifty-third year. Richard Davies, rector of Sapperton at the end of the seventeenth century, laconically recorded that 'he dyed a papist'. It may be so, we cannot say, but there is nothing in his plays to suggest that he was a papist when he wrote them. He was buried near the north wall of the chancel in Stratford church, almost underneath his monument, on Thursday, April 25th, eight days after his brother-in-law:

1616, Apr. 17. B. Will. Hartt, hatter.
1616, Apr. 25. B. Will. Shakspere, gent.

Seventy-eight years later one William Hall, a young Oxford graduate, wrote to a friend:

Dear Neddy,

I very greedily embraced this occasion of acquainting you with something which I found at Stratford upon Avon. That place I came

[1] There are three sheets to the will, the first of which is signed 'William Shakspere' and the second 'Willm̃ Shakspere'.

unto on Thursday night, and ye next day went to visit ye ashes of the Great Shakespear which lye interr'd in that Church. The verses which in his life-time he ordered to be cut upon his tomb-stone (for his Monument have others) are those which follow;

> Reader, for Jesus's Sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here:
> Blessed be he that Spares these Stones,
> And cursed be he that moves my bones.[1]

The little learning these verses contain, would be a very strong argument for ye want of it in the Author; did not they carry something in them which stands in need of a comment. There is in this Church a place which they call the bone-house, a repository for all bones they dig up; which are so many that they would load a great number of waggons. The Poet being willing to preserve his bones unmoved, lays a curse upon him that moves them; and haveing to do with Clarks and Sextons, for ye most part a very ignorant sort of people, he descends to ye meanest of their capacitys; and disrobes himself of that art, which none of his Co-temporaryes wore in greater perfection. Nor has the design mist of its effect; for lest they should not onely draw this curse upon themselvs, but also entail it upon their posterity, they have laid him full seventeen foot deep, deep enough to secure him. And so much for Stratford.

We know little more of Shakespeare's last years than we know of the first; indeed, the last years are the most mysterious of all. From Chettle's 'Apology' we can form some idea of the upstart crow of twenty-eight:

> my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooues his Art.

And subsequent contemporary allusions, though many of them are literary rather than personal, all go to confirm the same attractive portrait. For Meres he was 'mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare', for Barnfield and Weever again 'hony-flowing' and 'honie-tong'd', the anonymous author of *Parnassus* calls him 'sweete Mr.

[1] That Shakespeare wrote these verses was first claimed by Dowdall in 1693 after being shown the church by 'a clarke aboue 80 yrs old' (*cf.* p. 17). Hall misquotes; the verses on the stone read:

> Good frend for Iesus sake forbeare,
> To digg the dvst encloased heare!
> Bleste be ye man yt spares thes stones,
> And cvrst be he yt moves my bones.

Shakspeare . . . a shrewd fellow indeed', Anthony Scoloker 'friendly Shakespeare', Webster talks of his 'right happy and copious industry', and Thomas Heywood again of 'mellifluous Shake-speare'. But the most important testimony comes from his intimate friends, his fellow-actors Heminge and Condell, and his fellow-dramatist Jonson. In their Prefaces to the First Folio Heminge and Condell wrote that they had collected the plays

> without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, and Fellow aliue, as was our Shake-speare . . . Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it . . . And so we leaue you to other of his Friends.

One of these is Jonson, for whom he is 'gentle Shakespeare . . . sweet Swan of Auon', and 'my beloued the author'; and some years later he confessed:

> I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory, on this side Idolatry, as much as any. Hee was indeed honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent *Phantsie*; brave notions, and gentle expressions.

It is true that the only contemporary anecdote about Shakespeare, that recorded by John Manningham, does more credit to his wit than to his conjugal fidelity:

> 13 March 1601 (O.S.) Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Rich. 3. there was a citizen greue soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by the name of Ri: the 3. Shakespeare overhearing their conclusion went before, was intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Rich. the 3. was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conquerour was before Rich. the 3. Shakespeare's name was William.

On the other hand, Aubrey records the tradition 'the more to be admired, he was not a company keeper, lived in Shoreditch, wouldnt be debauched, & if invited to writ he was in paine'.

Rowe, in 1709, was the first to attempt a sketch of his character:

> Besides the advantages of his Wit, he was in himself a good-natur'd Man, of great sweetness in his Manners, and a most agreeable Companion . . . His exceeding Candour and good Nature must certainly have inclin'd all the gentler Part of the World to love him, as the power of his Wit oblig'd the Men of the most delicate Knowledge and polite Learning to admire him . . . His pleasurable Wit, and good Nature,



SHAKESPEARE'S MONUMENT IN STRATFORD CHURCH.

engag'd him in the Acquaintance, and entitled him to the Friendship of the Gentlemen of the Neighbourhood.

The only reference to Shakespeare's appearance is that of Aubrey, about 1681, from the testimony of William Beeston, the actor and son of Christopher Beeston: 'He was a handsome well-shap't man: very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth Witt'.

All this agrees with the fascinating reconstruction of Shakespeare's character and appearance made by Dr. Caroline Spurgeon from her analysis of the poet's unconscious self-revelation in his imagery. She finds him well-built, athletic, and healthy, quiet, with abnormally acute senses, particularly of hearing and taste. He was essentially a countryman, fond of animals, sport, and gardening, with a particular passion for horses and a game of bowls, clever with his hands and a good carpenter. 'For the rest of him, the inner man, five words sum up the essence of his quality and character as seen in his images—sensitiveness, balance, courage, humour and wholesomeness.'

The portraits of Shakespeare are not very helpful. There are two which we must accept as authentic representations, though not necessarily as good likenesses: the bust in the monument, and the engraving in the Folios. The bust was carved—in Cotswold stone by Gerard Janssen—before 1623, for the monument is mentioned by Digges in his verses in the First Folio, and must have been approved by Shakespeare's widow and by Dr. Hall, who is said to have commissioned it. The lack of detail in the carving was made good by colour, but in 1793 Malone covered it with a coat of paint. In 1861 the present colours were put on. The fleshy face, goggling eyes, and perhaps over-healthy glow are scarcely suggestive of the author of *The Tempest*.

The frontispiece of the First Folio, and of the three later Folios, is a copper engraving by Martin Droeshout, who was only fifteen when Shakespeare died. Presumably, therefore, it was engraved by the inexperienced—and doubtless inexpensive—young artist shortly before 1623 from an original portrait, which there is reason to believe was simply a line drawing of the head depicting Shakespeare as a youngish man. It exists in two states, of the first of which or 'proof' discovered by Halliwell-Phillipps there are only four copies, but though the first state is better than the last, of neither can it be said that the bulging forehead, stupid nose, and heavy jowl help us to visualise the poet.

There are a number of paintings which have been claimed as originals of the Droeshout engraving, of which the 'Flower Portrait'[1] at Stratford is the best known, or as authentic likenesses, such as the

[1] The Flower Portrait was almost certainly painted from the engraving.

Chandos Portrait attributed to Richard Burbage, but the Janssen bust and the Droeshout engraving remain the only two portraits which we can be certain are attempted representations, however unsuccessful.

Contemporary allusions are tantalisingly few; the re-creation of the man Shakespeare from the airy records of his imagination, from the expression of his unconscious mind, is inevitably an uncertain process; the portraits give little clue to his physical and none to his spiritual qualities, so we turn to his works and the conscious expression of his thought, for, said Rowe, 'The Character of the man is best seen in his Writings'. But is it? Of almost any other writer this would be true: of Chaucer, Milton, and Wordsworth for example, to mention three of the greatest names in our literature; or to take three of our greatest dramatists, it is true of Marlowe, Jonson, and Shaw. But Shakespeare is so impersonal, his identification of himself with his characters so complete—and this, of course, is one of the chief sources of his greatness as a dramatist—that we can never or rarely be sure that he is speaking non-dramatically, in his own person. That he had an almost divine understanding of and sympathy for man is certain; that he believed in the necessity of a stable and ordered political system, and that for a time the sexual aspect of life filled him with horror and loathing, we can be tolerably certain, but we can be sure of little else.

Nevertheless, when we are reading his works we are sometimes conscious of more than a shadowy figure at our elbow; when we are reading the *Sonnets*, perhaps, certainly when we are reading *Hamlet* or *The Tempest*, we are conscious of a presence more real than that of living man. Here is the young man of twenty-seven:

> Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view,
> Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
> Made old offences of affections new;
> Most true it is that I have looked on truth
> Askance and strangely: but, by all above,
> These blenches gave my heart another youth,
> And worse essays proved thee my best of love.

Here the man of thirty-seven:

> Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget

a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

And here the man of forty-seven:

> But this rough magic
> I here abjure; and, when I have requir'd
> Some heavenly music,—which even now I do,—
> To work mine end upon their senses that
> This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.

But Shakespeare lived another five years after writing *The Tempest*, time enough for another five plays, and all that remain are his parts in *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, if he really did write them after *The Tempest*. What, then, are we to make of the last years, the years of silence? We catch glimpses of an insubstantial figure buying a house in Blackfriars, acting as god-father to William Walker, attending marriages and funerals, making his will, and that is all. Why did the most creative of all men at the age of forty-seven lay down his pen and say 'I have done; I will write no more'? How could he? We cannot treat seriously Rowe's cosy suggestion 'that the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs to be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends'. It is inconceivable that Shakespeare, first-rate business-man though he was, wrote with his eye on the main chance:

> For gain not glory winged his roving flight,
> And grew immortal in his own despite,

that 'his literary attainments and successes were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters, his highest ambition to restore among his fellow-townsmen the family repute which his father's misfortunes had imperilled'; that he made his pile, and then like any stockbroker retired to play the seventeenth-century equivalents of golf and bridge.

We think of Keats's fear of death before his pen had gleaned his teeming brain, of the blind Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* for which

he received ten pounds, of the deaf Beethoven composing his celestial last quartets and full of projects for a tenth symphony, of the crippled Michelangelo dying in his ninetieth year in the middle of vast schemes and responsibilities, of the aged Renoir painting up to the last with his brush strapped into position between his contorted finger and thumb, of Virgil, Dante, Bach, Goethe, Cézanne, and the other great creative spirits of the world, and there seems to be no parallel. Perhaps he did write something and it has been lost? Perhaps he turned again to his first love, to the pure poetry of the *Sonnets* and lyrics—and there are indications in the later plays that he might well have done so—and perhaps his puritanical son-in-law destroyed his work? Or perhaps in 1612 he was a very sick man? Who knows? But the man who wrote the *Sonnets*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry IV*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*, though he might cease writing for the stage, could scarcely cease writing altogether and sink into what for him must have been the living death of a country gentleman pottering about his estate, unless he were too ill to think and too weak to write.

That he was ill at the beginning of 1616 is suggested by the fact that on March 25th he signed, apparently in haste, the rough and much corrected draft of his will instead of a fair copy, while there is evidence of failing powers in the tremors of the signatures. It is just possible that as early as May 1612, when he made his deposition in the Mountjoy suit, his memory was failing. And in the Stratford records there are fewer references than we should expect to one of the leading and wealthiest citizens, an energetic and capable man of affairs.

His death appears to have passed unnoticed; the eulogies begin with the introductory matter of the First Folio, but on the tablet beneath his effigy in Stratford church was cut:

> Ivdicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem:
> Terra tegit, popvlvs mæret, Olympvs habet.
>
> Stay Passenger, why goest thov by so fast?
> read if thov canst, whom enviovs Death hath plast,
> with in this monvment Shakspeare: with whome,
> qvick natvre dide: whose name doth deck ys Tombe,
> Far more than cost: sieh all, yt He hath writt,
> Leaves living art, bvt page, to serve his witt.
>
> Obiit año do 1616
> Ætatis 53 die 23 Apr.

The later history of Shakespeare's family is again summarised in the register of Stratford church:

1616, Nov. 23. C. Shaksper fillius Thomas Quyny gent.
1617, May 8. B. Shakspere fillius Tho. Quyny, gent.
1618, Feb. 9. C. Richard fillius Thomas Quinee.
1618, Nov. 1. B. Micael filius to Jone Harte, widowe.
1620, Jan. 23. C. Thomas filius to Thomas Queeney.
1623, Aug. 8. B. Mrs Shakspeare.
1626, Apr. 22. M. Mr Thomas Nash to Mrs Elizabeth Hall.
1634, Apr. 13. C. Thomas filius Thomae Hart.
1635, Nov. 26. B. Johannes Hall, medicus peritissimus.
1636, Sept. 18. C. Georgius filius Tho: Hart.
1639, Jan. 28. B. Thomas filius Thomae Quiney.
1639, Feb. 26. B. Richardus filius Tho: Quiney.
1639, Mar. 29. B. Willielmus Hart.
1646, Nov. 4. B. Joan Hart, widow.
1647, Apr. 5. B. Thomas Nash, Gent.
1649, July 16. B. Mrs Sussanna Hall, widow.
1662, Feb. 9. B. Judith, vxor Thomas Quiney Gent.

Shakespeare's father, John, died in 1601, his mother, Mary Arden, in 1608, and with the exception of his sister, Joan Hart, Shakespeare outlived all his brothers and sisters. His two eldest sisters, Joan (the first) and Margaret, had died in infancy, and Anne aged eight in 1579. His brothers all died unmarried, Edmund in 1607, Gilbert in 1612, and Richard in 1613. Apart from the 'base-borne' Edward, son of Edmund, and Joan Hart's three sons, William, Thomas, and Michael, and her daughter Mary, all of whom save Thomas died young or unmarried, Shakespeare had no nephews and nieces.

His wife, Anne Hathaway, died in August 1623 and was buried beside her husband, but not in the same grave, though it is said that she expressed a wish to lie there. There is a brass on the stone with the inscription:

> Heere lyeth interred the body of Anne wife
> of William Shakespeare who departed this life the
> 6th day of Avgvst: 1623 being of the Age of 67 yeares.

From her marriage in 1616 until 1652 his younger daughter Judith lived at The Cage in Bridge St. Her husband Thomas Quiney died sometime after 1655, but where we do not know. Judith died at Stratford in 1662, but the site of her grave is unknown. Their three sons, Shakespeare, Richard, and Thomas, all born after Shakespeare's death, died unmarried.

His elder daughter, Mrs. Susanna Hall, lived at New Place where her husband, Dr. John Hall, died at the age of sixty in 1635, and where

in July 1643, during the Civil War, Queen Henrietta Maria stayed two nights and was visited by Prince Rupert. She died in 1649 aged sixty-six, and was buried next to her husband in the chancel of Stratford church, with the inscription on her stone:

> Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
> Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall,
> Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
> Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.

Susanna Hall's only child, Elizabeth, was the last of Shakespeare's descendants, for though she married twice she died childless. Her first husband was Thomas Nash of Stratford, who died at New Place in 1647 and was buried next to Shakespeare. In 1649 she married a widower, John Bernard of Abington in Northamptonshire, where they went to live after the Restoration when he was knighted. There she died in 1670, her husband being buried beside her in 1674.

When Shakespeare's sister Joan Hart died in 1646, the Henley St. house, the 'Birthplace', in which she had lived, reverted to Susanna Hall, and on her death in 1649 to Elizabeth, who also inherited New Place and all the property entailed by her grandfather in his will. Elizabeth, Lady Bernard, left both Henley St. houses to Thomas and George Hart, grandsons of Joan, and their descendants lived in the 'Birthplace' until 1806, the other half having been converted into an inn, The Maidenhead. After Sir John Bernard's death the remainder of Shakespeare's property was sold to Sir Edward Walker for £1,060, New Place reverting to the Clopton family, who had built it, through the marriage of his daughter to Sir Hugh Clopton, who rebuilt it. After his death it was bought by the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who 'to vex his neighbours' pulled it down in 1759, and with 'Gothic barbarity' cut down the mulberry tree said to have been planted by Shakespeare.

CHAPTER II

PLAYWRIGHTS AND PLAYERS

THE first real English comedy was written about 1550, the first real tragedy about 1560; Shakespeare was born in 1564, and by 1601 he had written *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV* and *Hamlet*. These dates indicate the speed with which the English drama developed in the course of the second half of the sixteenth century from adolescence to full maturity. But as it is impossible fully to understand Shakespeare's plays in isolation, without, that is, relating them to the environment which was after all partly responsible for them, so it is, if not impossible, at least difficult to understand Elizabethan drama as a whole without some knowledge of the source from which it so suddenly sprang.

The degenerate descendant of the Athenian drama, the Roman mime, disappeared in the seventh century, killed by the barbarian invasions, and though it is possible that the jongleurs and minstrels of the Dark and Middle Ages inherited some of its traditions, modern European drama had its origins in the Catholic Church, uninfluenced by classical models. The first appearance of dramatic dialogue in the liturgy was in the ninth century at the celebration of Mass on Easter Day: two priests dressed in white robes as angels faced two other priests whose robes signified that they were women, and they chanted alternately:

Quem quæritis in sepulchro, Christicolæ?
Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o cælicolæ.
Non est hic: surrexit sicut prædixerat;
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.

Whom do you seek in the sepulchre, O Christian women?
Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, O heavenly ones.
He is not here; he is risen as he foretold;
Go, announce that he is risen from the grave.

It was not long before elementary action was added to the dialogue, and by the end of the tenth century at the festivals of Easter and Christmas miniature religious dramas were enacted in the church by priests who chanted in Latin. The inevitable elaboration of the plays and the extension of their subject-matter made them too complex for

performance inside the church, so they were moved first into the churchyard and thence into the market-place. When this happened the citizens, helped by the wandering jongleurs, took over the performance of the plays from the clergy and substituted their native dialect for the clerical Latin. After 1311, therefore, when the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi, instituted in 1264, was enjoined by the Pope, the trade-gilds made the day, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, their chief festival, and on it enacted their cycles of Mystery Plays.

Mystery Plays[1] were dramatised versions of stories from the Old and New Testaments, and were arranged in 'cycles' covering the whole of the Bible story. Thus the first play in the York Cycle of 1415 was the *Creation* performed by the Tanners, the last—and forty-eighth—the *Crucifixion*, performed by the Mercers. Generally there was some attempt to suit the craft to the subject: for example, the Shipwrights performed the episode of 'God warning Noah to make an Ark of floatable wood', and the Vintners that of the miracle of turning water into wine. These plays are written in verse, crude, yet occasionally transfigured by flashes of real pathos and poetry, and sometimes relieved by comic scenes, such as the famous sheep-stealing incident in *The Second Shepherd's Play* of the Towneley Cycle.

They were acted either on scaffolds erected in the street, or on a movable stage called a pageant, which was wheeled from station to station so that as many people as possible could see the sequence. There were three stories, from the top one of which angels could descend to the middle or main stage, below which was a curtained dressing-room which also served as Hell; but the actors might overflow into the street as when 'Herod rages in the pageant and in the street also'. Judging by the accounts kept by the gilds it seems certain that within their limits the plays were elaborately produced: for instance, 2*s.* 1*d.* was paid for 'Two and a half yards of buckram for the Holy Ghost's coat', and among the properties at one performance was 'half a yard of Red Sea'; and gilds were liable to a fine if their performance was unsatisfactory.

The fifteenth century with its love of allegory tended to make of the biblical characters personified abstractions such as Studious Desire, Sensual Appetite, Fellowship, and Good Deeds, and so the Morality Play, more moral than religious, developed out of the Mystery Play. The most famous of these Moralities is the late fifteenth-century play *Everyman*, deservedly so, for apart from its literary merit as a whole it

[1] Miracle Plays, based on the lives of the Saints, were common in France, but never very common in England. The term Miracle Play is often used to signify either of these two kinds of Medieval drama.

contains the first really great moment in English[1] drama when Beauty looks into Everyman's grave and refuses to accompany him:

Everyman. For into this cave must I crepe,
And torne to the erthe, and there slepe.
Beaute. What in to this grave, alas!
Everyman. Ye, there shall we consume, more and lesse!
Beaute. And what, sholde I smoder here?
Everyman. Ye, by my fayth, and never more appere!
In this·worlde lyve no more we shall,
But in heven before the hyest lord of all.
Beaute. I crosse out all this! adewe by saynt Johan!
I take my cappe in my lappe, and am gone.
Everyman. What, Beaute, whyder wyll ye?
Beaute. Peas! I am defe, I loke not behynde me,
Nat and thou woldest gyve me all the golde in thy chest.
Everyman. Alas! wherto may I truste?
Beaute gothe fast awaye fro me.
She promysed with me to lyve and dye.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century came the Interlude, originally a comic episode played between two serious scenes, but the name was soon applied indiscriminately to Moralities as well and to any short dramatic performance. Its origins are uncertain, but it must have owed something to the traditional folk-plays like that of Saint George, and to the popular comic elements in the Mystery Plays; at the same time it is a development of the Morality, didactic rather than moral, and more important, written to be acted in the halls of large houses, often during a feast, by boys or by professional players. With *The Four P's*, written about 1545, by John Heywood, we have reached the divide where religious and ethical drama is quite clearly passing over into secular comedy. The story is of how a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Pothecary, and a Pedlar compete as to who shall tell the biggest lie, and of how the prize is won by the Palmer, who maintains that he has never seen a woman out of temper. It is all rather childish, but it is important because it sets out to amuse rather than to instruct, and because the biblical characters of the Mysteries, allegorised in the Moralities, have re-emerged at the other end once again as individuals, but secularised. Although Mystery plays were performed until the end of Elizabeth's reign, by 1550 English drama was ready to burst from its medieval bondage and to flower in the fierce light of the Renaissance. But as yet it was unaffected by classical models.

It was mainly, as was only to be expected, through the schools and

[1] *Everyman* is really a translation from the Dutch *Elkerlijk*.

universities that the classical influence came to modify the native drama. There the New Learning had led to the study of Neo-Classical and Classical plays, particularly of the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and of the tragedies of Seneca. The boys of St. Paul's school had acted plays by Plautus and Terence as early as 1527, and the performance of these Latin plays became part of the regular curriculum at Eton, Westminster, and other schools. The importance that was attached to acting may be gauged from the fact that in 1546 students of Queen's College, Cambridge, who failed to take part in a play or to attend a performance once a year were liable to be sent down.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, then, the position was this: the medieval Mysteries and Moralities were still popularly performed, but in addition there were the Interludes, crude secular farces with little or no plot and construction, performed by boys and by professional players in great men's houses; half-way between were chronicle history plays like Bale's *King John* (1547), an odd mixture of historical and abstract figures; and finally there were plays in Latin performed by schoolboys and by students at the university. It could not be long before the two were brought together: the vigorous but shapeless native interlude and the carefully constructed classical play.

These native and classical elements were united about 1550, when Nicholas Udall, the headmaster of Eton, wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, a comedy for performance perhaps by school-boys. Although Udall called it an interlude it is really the first modern English play, for it has a fully developed plot adapted from the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, and is constructed on the classical model with acts and scenes. It is a medley, it is true, for though the minor characters are drawn from contemporary life, Mathew Merygreeke is really the Vice of the Moralities, and Roister Doister is the Pyrgopolinices of Plautus. Again, it is classical in its observance of the unities, medieval in its morality. Nevertheless, 'in *Roister Doister* we emerge from medieval grotesquery and allegory into the clear light of actual life, into an agreeable atmosphere of urbanity and natural delineation.'

In 1562 Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton did for tragedy what Nicholas Udall had done for comedy some ten years earlier, for in that year they produced their play *Gorboduc*, a native theme in the classical manner. This play, the first real tragedy in English, contains all, or almost all, the elements of a Senecan tragedy: chorus, messengers instead of action, interminable declamations, stichomythia or line by line dialogue, and division into acts and scenes. Each act, however, is preceded by the non-classical device of a dumb-show, the allegorical character of which is accentuated by the music of appropriate instru-

ments; nor do the authors observe the unities of time and place, for their neglect of which they were reproached by Sir Philip Sidney: '*Gorboduc*, which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesy; yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances: which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in Place and Time, the two necessary companies of all corporal actions.' 'The style of this old play', writes Lamb, 'is stiff and cumbersome, like the dresses of its times. There may be flesh and blood underneath, but we cannot get at it.' Fortunately this static and didactic form of drama was not to 'remain as an exact model of all Tragedies', any more than Plautus and Terence were to become the models of English comedy. The importance of these classical models was that they showed English dramatists how to construct a play, but the creative spirit of the Elizabethans was too powerful to be fettered by pedantry, and when classical construction conflicted with Elizabethan exuberance their imperative expression overwhelmed all restraints and their poetry swamped the conventions. *Gorboduc* is of the greatest importance for another reason: it is the first English play to be written in blank verse, the vehicle that was to be used with such miraculous effect a few years later.

It may then be said that Shakespeare and the modern English drama were born almost at the same time, though the next important development had to wait until he had come of age and left Stratford for London. The years of Shakespeare's nonage coincided with the attempt to harness English drama to that of Rome, and English Senecan plays such as *Jocasta* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* were acted at Court and at the universities; but by the middle of the eighties, when Shakespeare attained his majority, the native genius had asserted itself and Seneca and the Romans were servants, not masters.

About the middle of the sixteenth century, players, some of whom had been retained by the nobility in their houses, began to travel in companies, and, though they did not neglect the provinces, they were naturally attracted to London, which under the Tudors was rapidly gaining in importance. There they would lodge at an inn, hire the inn-yard, which like Chaucer's Tabard was surrounded by a gallery, and in the afternoons perform their plays on a stage erected for the occasion. Sometimes they would buy an inn outright and convert it into a permanent theatre; but the first London theatre to be built was The Theatre in 1576. Owing to the opposition of the City authorities, with their puritanical horror of the stage and more rational fear of the

Plague, all the early public theatres were built outside the City walls. Thus The Theatre and The Curtain were in Moorfields; The Rose, The Swan, The Globe and The Hope in Southwark; The Fortune just north of Cripplegate, and The Red Bull in St. John's St., Clerkenwell.

In 1632 Edmund Howes, in his continuation of Stow's *Survey of London* (1598), wrote of the building of the Salisbury Court theatre in 1629:

> This is the 17th stage or common playhouse which hath been new made within the space of three score years within London and the suburbs; viz., 5 inns or common hostelries turned to playhouses, one cockpit, St. Pauls singing school, one in the Blackfriars, and one in the Whitefriars, which was built last of all in the year 1629. All the rest not named were erected only for common playhouses, besides the new-built bear garden [the Hope], which was built as well for plays and fencers' prizes as bull baiting; besides one in former times in Newington Butts.

The inn yards used as playhouses seem generally to have been within the City, and the following are known to have been so used:

The Cross Keys, and The Bell in Gracechurch Street.
The Bell Savage on Ludgate Hill.
The Bull in Bishopsgate Street within the walls.
The Boar's Head in Eastcheap (?).

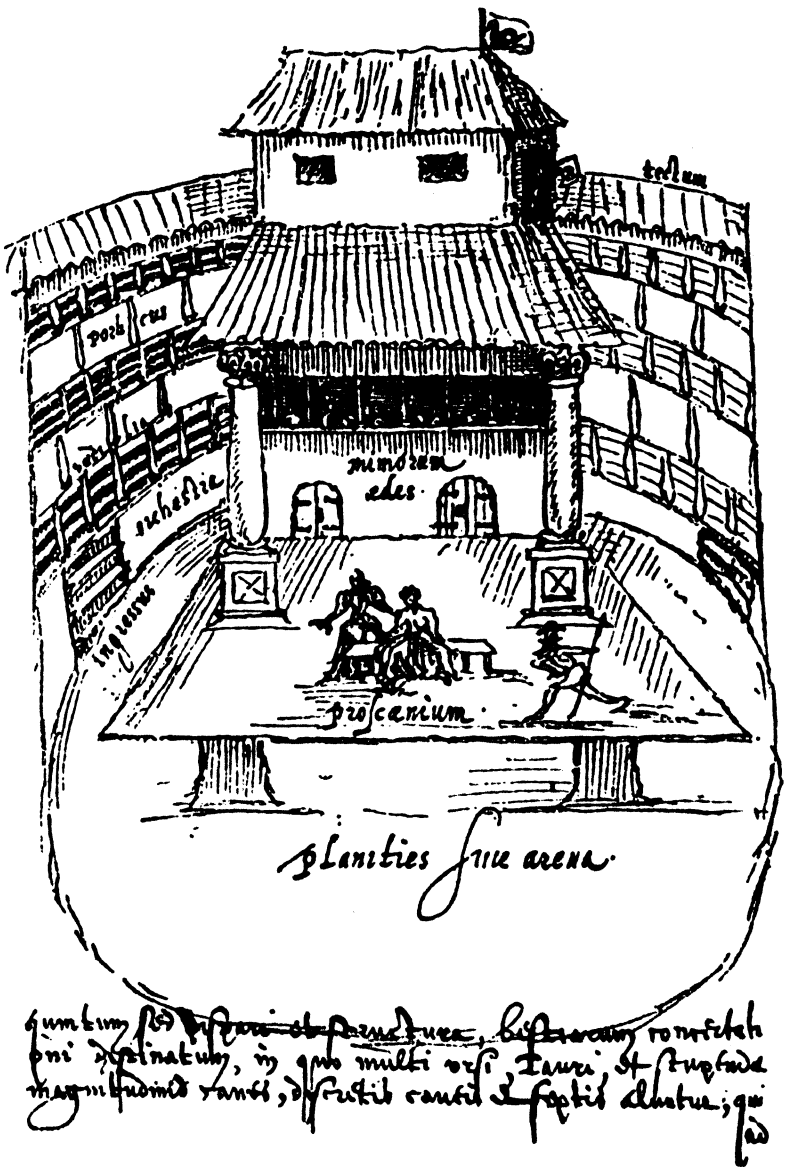
The eight 'public' or 'open' theatres, built on the model of an inn yard, were all outside the jurisdiction of the City:

The Theatre. 1576. Moorfields. Built by James Burbage and John Brayne and used for other activities as well as plays. It was pulled down in 1598-9 and its timbers used for The Globe.

The Curtain. 1576. Moorfields. Used by various companies before 1603 when it became the home of Queen Anne's Servants.

The Rose. c. 1587. Bankside. Built by Philip Henslowe. In Feb. 1592 Lord Strange's Men were acting there. The home of the Admiral's Men.

The Swan. c. 1594. Bankside. Built by Francis Langley. It was used for other activities than plays, but by Pembroke's Men in 1597-8, perhaps by the Chamberlain's in 1596. It was drawn and described in the commonplace book of Arend van Buchell from a description of John de Witt who was in London about 1596:



THE SWAN THEATRE

There are in London four theatres of noteworthy beauty, which bear diverse names according to their diverse signs. In them a different action is daily presented to the people. The two finest of these are situated to the southward beyond the Thames, named, from the signs they display, the Rose and the Swan. Two others are outside the city towards the north, and are approached 'per Episcopalem portem'; in the vernacular, 'Bishopsgate'. There is also a fifth, of dissimilar structure, devoted to beast-baiting, wherein many bears, bulls, and dogs of stupendous size are kept in separate dens and cages, which, being pitted against each other, afford men a most delightful spectacle. Of all the theatres, however, the largest and most distinguished is that whereof the sign is a swan (commonly called the Swan theatre), since it contains three thousand persons, and is built of a concrete of flintstones (which greatly abound in Britain) and supported by wooden columns, painted in such excellent imitation of marble that it might deceive even the most cunning. Since its form seems to approach that of a Roman structure, I have depicted it above. (*Trans. from Latin by William Archer.*)

It seems unlikely, however, that The Swan was really made of flintstone as all other theatres appear to have been made of wood, and an audience of three thousand must be a gross exaggeration. The drawing too is open to suspicion, as it shows a movable stage supporting the permanent superstructure.

The Globe. 1599. Bankside. Built by the Burbages, partly from the timbers of The Theatre. The headquarters of Shakespeare's company, the Chamberlain's and King's Men. Burned down in 1613 but rebuilt in 1614 and pulled down in 1644. The finest of the public theatres.

The Fortune. 1600. North of Cripplegate. Built by Henslowe and Edward Alleyn. The contract for this building is preserved in Henslowe's papers and shows that it was built of wood on a brick foundation, that it was square, 80 feet outside and 55 feet inside, and that the stage was 43 feet wide and projected half way (27½ feet) into the yard. The total cost was £1320. It became the home of The Lord Admiral's Men. In 1621 it was burned and rebuilt in brick in 1623.

The Red Bull. 1604. Clerkenwell. Built by Aaron Holland. In 1609 the Queen's Men were authorised to act 'at their usual houses of the Curtain and the Red Bull'. Its appeal was sensational.

The Hope. 1614. Bankside. Built by Henslowe. It had a movable stage, and after 1616 was used for bull- and bear-baiting and prize fights.

The other playhouses mentioned by Howes, The Cockpit, 'St. Paul's singing school', The Blackfriars, and the Whitefriars (rebuilt nearby as Salisbury Court in 1629), were all 'private' or 'closed' theatres.

The chief characteristics of the Elizabethan 'public' theatre are well known. It was essentially a circular or rectangular building of wood with roofed galleries overlooking the open court which it enclosed. There were really three stages: the main or apron stage, with trap-doors, some five feet high and projecting into the court; at the back of the apron was an inner stage flanked by dressing-rooms, and above it was the gallery which served as an upper stage. Curtains could be drawn across the inner stage, and above the upper and over the apron stage was a canopy to protect the actors from the weather. Properties were such as could easily be got on and off the apron stage: tables, chairs, beds, trees, or even a wall; and there was no attempt to represent a scene by means of painted canvas. The scenery of the inner stage, which could be changed while the curtains were drawn, was probably a little more elaborate. Plays were performed by daylight, in the afternoon, and women's parts, it must be remembered, were played by boys, for no professional actresses were allowed on the stage before the Restoration. It is difficult to say how far the Elizabethan theatre modified the Elizabethan drama, or the drama the theatre, but it is certain that this simple staging was perfectly adapted to the rapid and fluid production that these violent Romantic plays demanded.

In addition to these performances in the public theatres there were the private performances in the halls of the nobility, at the universities and at the Inns of Court, where the students produced their own plays but occasionally called in the professional companies, as on the famous occasion when *The Comedy of Errors* was acted at Gray's Inn at Christmas 1594.[1] But above all, there were the productions at the royal palaces, particularly at Christmas, when the Master of the Revels summoned the players to entertain Elizabeth or James and paid them £10 for a performance. This Court patronage was financially important to the players but even more important to the drama, for the popular plays broke down the pedantic Senecan tradition, and the Elizabethan drama became the expression of the nation as a whole, drawing its inspiration from cultured and vulgar alike.

Besides the 'public' theatres there were the so-called 'private' theatres, the history of which is bound up with that of the Boys' Companies. The educational value that was attached to acting in the sixteenth century has already been indicated, and so we find in Henry

[1] See p. 351.

VIII's reign the Children of the Chapel Royal being trained as actors as well as singers, while the Boys of St. Paul's performed at Court the Interludes of John Heywood who himself produced them. Some of these boys were later organised into professional companies, and as they were able to act women's parts as well as the mixed companies of men and boys, and could offer more in the way of musical entertainment, they became formidable rivals of the adult players. In 1584 the Boys of St. Paul's acted Lyly's plays in the refectory of the dissolved monastery at Blackfriars, and again until about 1590 in a similar hall near St. Paul's. Later they performed plays written for them by Chapman, Middleton, and Marston, but their company was disbanded soon after the accession of James I. The Children of the Chapel Royal had a longer history. They were performing at the Blackfriars theatre as early as 1576, then after an interval they acted plays by Jonson, Chapman and Marston, and it is to these children, the 'little eyases', that Shakespeare refers in *Hamlet*. In 1609 they moved to a theatre in Whitefriars and soon the competition of the Boys' Companies was at an end, and the King's Men took possession of the Blackfriars theatre. (See p. 43.)

This theatre had been reconstructed in 1596; in 1608 Shakespeare and his fellow actors took over the lease, and here they performed their plays in the winter months when performances in the 'open' Globe must sometimes have been impossible. For the Blackfriars theatre was roofed in, and this was the essential difference between the 'public' and the 'private' theatres, which were public in the sense that anybody who cared to pay the higher price—from sixpence to half a crown, as against a penny to a shilling in the 'public' theatres—could attend. Originally the private theatres were halls like those in private houses, but then galleries were added and seats provided both in them and in the 'pit', the apron stage of the public theatre being preserved. At the same time the more select audiences, and the similarity of these private theatres to the halls of the royal palaces, great houses, and the Inns of Court, must have modified the method of production. For instance, the greater intimacy of a roofed-in theatre must have led to a quieter style of acting, the music given by the boys between the acts in their private theatre became a customary part of the performance, and it was inevitable that experiments should be made with the more elaborate staging employed at Court performances. But Elizabethan drama was too various, elusive, and vital to be shackled by the painted scenery of the Italian theatre, and plays continued to be staged in both types of theatre with the aid of little more than simple movable properties, expensive though not historical costume, and dialogue that indicated, or poetry that suggested, the scene.

With the accession of James I, however, and the vogue of the masque as a form of entertainment at Court, the private theatres such as The Blackfriars, The Cockpit built in 1616 in Drury Lane, and Salisbury Court, which were better suited for expensive productions in the manner of Inigo Jones, adopted some of the devices of the Court stage, and Shakespeare's later plays, *The Tempest* in particular, show clearly the influence of the masque. But it was not until the time of Charles I and D'Avenant that spectacle began seriously to compete with the play in the public theatres, and it was not until 1661 that Pepys wrote in his *Diary* as something worthy of remark that he had been to see a performance of *Hamlet*, 'done with scenes'.

The professional actors were organised in companies under the protection of the nobility. This patronage had become essential after the Act of 1572, which was really a part of the Tudor Poor Law, and an attempt to deal with the new problem of unemployment occasioned by the breakdown of the ordered life of the Middle Ages. According to the Act, therefore, all players who were not in the service of some noble were classed as rogues and vagabonds and liable to severe penalties.

> All ydle persones goinge about in any Countrey of the said Realme, having not Lord or Maister . . and all Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes and Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towardes any other honorable Personage of greater Degree . . which . . shall wander abroade and have not Lycense of two Justices of the Peace at the leaste . . wher and in what Shier they shall happen to wander . . shalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vacabondes and Sturdy Beggers.

On her accession Elizabeth retained four interlude players, later increased to eight, as members of the royal household. Other professional companies, however, acted at Court, and there are records of performances by the servants of Lord Clinton, Lord Derby, Lord Charles Howard, the Earl of Warwick, and the Earl of Leicester.

Leicester's Company was the most important of these, and from 1572 to 1583 performed regularly at Court. James Burbage was a member, and when he built The Theatre in 1576 the company probably acted there until its reorganisation in 1583. In 1586-7 they were at Stratford, where it is just possible, though improbable, that Shakespeare joined them, but after Leicester's death in 1588 they probably combined with Lord Strange's Men.

In 1583 the Queen's Company was formed under the patronage of Elizabeth, who ordered the Master of the Revels, Edmund Tilney,

to select a number of players from other companies. According to Stow

> There were twelve of the best chosen, and at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworn the queenes servants and were allowed wages and liveries as groomes of the chamber . . . Among these twelve players were two rare men, viz., Robert Wilson, for a quicke, delicate, refined extemporall witt, and Richard Tarleton, for a wondrous plentifull pleasant extemporall wit, he was the wonder of his tyme.[1]

Robert Wilson was one of Leicester's Men, and two other players of his company, John Laneham and William Johnson, were taken for the Queen's. When it is remembered that twelve actors was a large number for a company, the reason for the reorganisation of Leicester's Men in 1583 becomes apparent.

The formation of the Queen's Company was only one symptom of the struggle between the Court and the puritanical City authorities, who were jealous for their ancient right of controlling public amusements within their walls, and no doubt angry at the establishment of The Theatre and The Curtain just outside their jurisdiction. The antagonism of the Puritans can be judged from *Histrio-Mastix*, *The Players Scourge*, 1633, in which Prynne protests

> that popular Stage-playes (the very Pompes of the Divell which we renounce in Baptisme, if we beleeve the Fathers) are sinfull, heathenish, lewde, ungodly Spectacles, and most pernicious Corruptions; condemned in all ages, as intolerable Mischiefes to Churches, to Republickes, to the manners, mindes, and soules of men. And that the Profession of Play-poets, of Stage-players; together with the penning, acting, and frequenting of Stage-playes, are unlawfull, infamous and misbeseeming Christians.

From 1583-91 the Queen's Men performed regularly at Court, but in 1592 their place was taken by Strange's Company to whom, among others, they sold plays in 1593, which suggests that they were in difficulties: *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, and perhaps the old *Hamlet*. In 1594 they were with Sussex's Men at the Rose, but after that there is no record of them in London. No doubt the plague of 1593-4 and the greater attractions of the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Men account for their disappearance.

Philip Henslowe, the builder of the Rose, the Fortune, and the Hope, had an interest in the affairs of a number of companies, the

[1] *Survey.*

most important of which was the Admiral's. This company, under the patronage of Lord Howard, in 1585 created Lord High Admiral, acted at Court in 1574 and again in 1585, at about which time Edward Alleyn and his brother John left Worcester's Men to join them. At Christmas 1588-9 they were at Court and were paid 'for twoe Enterludes or playes, and for showing other feates of activity and tumblinge'. Later in the year they were at Cambridge, in November 'very dutifullie obeyed' an order of the Lord Mayor of London 'in her Maiesties name to forbeare playinge', and at Christmas were again at Court, where they showed 'certen feates of activitie'. In 1589-90 they can be traced at Ipswich, Maidstone, Winchester, Marlborough, Gloucester, Coventry and Oxford.

Until 1592 there is nothing to suggest that Henslowe was connected with the Admiral's Men, but in October of that year Edward Alleyn married his stepdaughter. Then followed two years of plague, of dissolution and reorganisation of companies, and of confusion and obscurity. In May 1593, for instance, Alleyn, although described as a 'Servant to the Right Honourable Lord High Admiral', was authorised to travel with Lord Strange's Men, five of whom were named: William Kempe, Thomas Pope, John Hemminge, Augustine Phillips, and George Bryan. And for 1594 Henslowe recorded in his *Diary*:

> In the name of god Amen begininge at Newington my Lord Admeralle men & my Lorde Chamberlen men As ffolowethe 1594.

June	3.	Heaster & Asheweros	viij^{s}.
	4.	the Jewe of Malta	x^{s}.
	5.	Andronicous	xij^{s}.
	6.	Cutlacke	xj^{s}.
	8. ne	Bellendon	xvij^{s}.
	9.	Hamlet	viij^{s}.
	10.	Heaster	v^{s}.
	11.	the Tamynge of A Shrowe	ix^{s}.
	12.	Andronicous	vij^{s}.
	13.	the Jewe	iiij^{s}.

On June 15th, however, the Admiral's Men were settled at Henslowe's Rose, where the great Alleyn-Henslowe partnership was firmly established, Alleyn, the greatest actor of his time, playing the lead in Marlowe's plays. In their first full season at the Rose, from June 1594 to June 1595, they played *The Jew of Malta*, *The Massacre of Paris*, *Tamburlaine*, *Parts* 1 *and* 2, and *Dr. Faustus* fifty-one times altogether. In November 1600 they moved to the Fortune, and Henslowe employed other playwrights; between 1598

and 1603 Chettle and his collaborators were responsible for 52 plays, and Dekker for 45. After 1603 the Admiral's Men became successively Prince Henry's Servants, the Servants of the Palsgrave, and the Prince's Men, and continued to occupy the rebuilt Fortune until the closing of the theatres.

The main rivals of the Admiral's were Lord Strange's Men, a company acting in the provinces from 1576 under the patronage of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange. Their early history is obscure, but it seems probable that about 1590 James Burbage organised a combination of the rump of Leicester's Men playing at his Theatre and for whom he had secured the patronage of Lord Hunsdon, with Lord Strange's, for in 1593 Kempe, Bryan, and Pope, former members of Leicester's Company, were with them. This new Strange's Company acted six plays at Court in the winter of 1591-2, and until 1594 had some sort of connection with Henslowe and Alleyn, for from February to June 1592 they played for Henslowe at the Rose, on March 25th performing *Henry VI, Part* 1; then, when the theatres were closed in the summer on account of the plague and they toured the provinces, Alleyn was with them, at any rate in May 1593, when, although described as a Servant of the Admiral, he headed the list of Strange's Men.

It was while they were on tour, in September 1593, that Lord Strange succeeded to the title of Lord Derby, by which name the company was called until his death in April 1594. In June they secured the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, and when he died in July 1596, of his son George Carey, who became Lord Chamberlain in March 1597, when they resumed the title of the Chamberlain's Men which they had adopted in June 1594. The powerful patronage of the Lord Chamberlain seems to have established their prosperity, for from 1594 to the end of the reign they played regularly at Court and became independent of Henslowe and Alleyn. The first reference to Shakespeare as a member of the company occurs in the record of the Court performance at Greenwich in 1594:

> Dec. 26, 27. William Kempe William Shakespeare & Richard Burbage seruantes to the Lord Chamberleyne.

Marlowe was dead, and there was no immediate rival to the rising star of Shakespeare, whose free combination with Burbage and his fellows[1] under the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain proved even

[1] The Licence for the King's Men of 19 May 1603 mentioned 'Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, Augustyne Phillippes, Iohn Heninges, Henrie Condell, William Sly, Robert Armyn, Richard Cowly'.

stronger than that of Henslowe-Alleyn and their mercenaries, and the rest of their history is one of almost uninterrupted prosperity. Their home was at James Burbage's Theatre, though there was a connection with the Cross Keys Inn dating at least from 1589, when Lord Strange's Men disobeyed the Lord Mayor's order to forbear playing and 'in very Contemptuous manner went to the Crosse keys and played that afternoon'. In 1599 they built their new theatre, The Globe, out of the timbers of the old; in 1603 they became the King's Servants and Grooms of the Chamber, and in 1608 they secured a private theatre, the Blackfriars, for their winter quarters.

In the history of the Companies the most important are, to begin with, Leicester's and the Queen's, but after 1590 the Admiral's and the Strange-Chamberlain Company. There were many others, in many of which Henslowe had an interest: Sussex's and Pembroke's, for instance, and Worcester's, which in 1603 became Queen Anne's Servants, and in 1611 The Lady Elizabeth's Men signed a bond to Henslowe. Henslowe died in 1616, and Alleyn, who no longer took an active interest in affairs, in 1626.

Most of the theatres were built as speculations by business men; thus James Burbage was financed by John Brayne; Francis Langley, who built The Swan, had no connection with acting; and Henslowe, an enterprising pawnbroker and dealer in slum property, owned The Rose, The Fortune, and The Hope. On the other hand, Richard and Cuthbert Burbage built The Globe and distributed half the shares among other members of the Company. The owners were called housekeepers, and generally received all or part of the money paid for admission to the galleries; Henslowe, for instance, never received less than half the galleries for his rent of The Rose.

The actors were divided into sharers, who received 'the proffit arising from the dores' or the general charge for admission, and hired actors, musicians, and stage attendants, whom they paid. There was also the book-keeper or prompter, and the boys who appear to have been bound to sharers in return for training. Many of the Chamberlain's Men, including Shakespeare, were both actor-sharers and housekeepers, but the actors of Henslowe's companies do not seem to have had any stake in the theatres.

Henslowe acted as banker and manager of his companies and kept a hold on them and on the writers who supplied them with plays by his advances of money; for instance, 'Lent unto mr dickers and mr chettell the 26 of maye 1599 in est of a Boocke called the tragede of Agamemnon the some of xxx^{s}'. In his own words, 'Should these fellowes Come out of my debt I should have noe rule with them'. Small wonder that in 1615 his company drew up a list of 'Articles of

oppression against Mr Hinchlowe'. Although Henslowe prospered and his son-in-law Alleyn retired as Lord of the Manor of Dulwich, there is no indication that the members of their companies were as prosperous as the Chamberlain's Men, who managed their own affairs so well that they kept their organisation intact from 1594 to the closing of the theatres in 1642.

Playwrights were sometimes attached permanently to a company, as were Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Thomas Heywood; sometimes, like Dekker and Chettle, they were engaged under contract for a period; others like Jonson preferred to remain independent. When a company bought a play it became their property and a valuable and jealously guarded part of the joint capital of the sharers. Robert Greene was accused of selling the same play to different companies, and no doubt it was not an uncommon practice.

The history of the drama in the twenty years that succeeded the publication of *Gorboduc* in 1565 is obscure. That there was a great increase in the demand for dramatic entertainment is certain, and no doubt there was a corresponding increase in the supply, but the plays were ephemeral affairs, at best patched up and rewritten but rarely published, for it paid the actors to keep them to themselves, and few publishers would think of them as literature worth preserving. The few plays that we possess are mostly either Senecan imitations, like Gascoigne's *Jocasta* or Wilmot's *Tancred and Gismund*, or, like Thomas Preston's *Cambyses*, a compromise between an interlude and a classical play. Progress was disappointing, partly because dramatists were toying with the Senecan manner which was at odds with the swelling Elizabethan spirit, partly because a satisfactory medium had not yet been discovered. But suddenly, beginning in 1584, came a decade of startling advance, when Senecan rules were light-heartedly abandoned, and prose and blank verse were rapidly developed as dramatic mediums.

The new impetus came from the Universities, and the group of dramatists who may be said fairly to have launched the Elizabethan drama were known as the University Wits, the most important members being Lyly, Peele, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe. Of these the last three were dead by 1594, Peele died in 1596, and Lyly wrote nothing for the theatre after 1590, so that after preparing the way for Shakespeare they left it clear and without an immediate rival to their great successor.

John Lyly wrote his plays for the Children of the Chapel Royal and for the Children of St. Paul's; they are courtly and artificial comedies, written largely in the euphuistic language of which he was the creator, and though he had no great influence on the later drama,

he rescued comedy from mere buffoonery, emphasised the importance of language rather than action, wrote some exquisite lyrics, and above all established prose as a possible vehicle for comedy. *Endymion*, 'a piece of theatrical confectionery suited to the precocious children', is his best play and one to which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* owes something.

George Peele's greatest contribution to the drama was the development of blank verse, which by his lightness of touch and strain of real poetry he helped to free from the iambic rigidity of *Gorboduc*. His *David and Bethsabe* contains the well-known passage beginning:

> Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
> And brings my longings tangled in her hair.

Robert Greene is perhaps most famous—or notorious—for his attack on Shakespeare, 'the upstart crow', in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, written on his deathbed in 1592. He too was a poet, though inferior to Marlowe whom he emulated, but he possessed a gift in which Marlowe was singularly lacking, a sense of humour. His romantic history of *James IV* has comic scenes as well as fairies, and his *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, though nominally set in the thirteenth century, contains lively pictures of Elizabethan England, as does also the remarkable dramatic fable written in conjunction with Thomas Lodge, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, where the scene is meant to be Nineveh in the time of Jonah. The mixture of comedy, romance, and tragedy, of the contemporary with the historic, is typical of much Elizabethan drama, and gives it a breadth and freshness that preserves it from the perils of pedantry.

Thomas Kyd in his *Spanish Tragedy* (1588-9) showed what could be done with a contemporary theme. It is the archetype of the Elizabethan tragedy of revenge, a violent melodrama exploiting to the full the emotion of horror, and with much of the more picturesque paraphernalia of Senecan tragedy, a play that was to influence, among others, Shakespeare, Tourneur, and Webster. Indeed, in the scenes of Hieronimo's madness brought about by grief at the murder of his son, Lamb suspected the hand of Webster: 'they are full of that wild solemn preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in the *Duchess of Malfi*'. Certainly such a passage as this, melodramatic though it is, is the language of great tragedy:

> Let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the winds blowing, the bells tolling, the owls shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking twelve. And then at last, sir,

> starting, behold a man hanging, and tottering, and tottering, as you know the wind will wave a man, and I with a trice to cut him down. And looking upon him by the advantage of my torch, find it to be my son Horatio.

For fifty years *The Spanish Tragedy* remained one of the most popular of plays, but more important than Kyd was the dazzling genius Christopher Marlowe, born in the same year as Shakespeare and dying when Shakespeare had scarcely begun to make a name for himself. Like Shakespeare, Marlowe was a lyric poet turned dramatist, and though, except in *Edward II*, he was too impatient to bother about construction in his chaotic plays, he made blank verse a vehicle that carried triumphantly the towering passions of his tragic heroes. This perfection of dramatic poetry within the limits of the end-stopped line was his greatest contribution to the drama. His characters, Tamburlaine, Barabas, Faustus, are terrifying in their confidence in the foundations of human greatness and in their blind contempt for fortune that is ultimately to overwhelm them. But their passionate aspiration is static and unrelieved; only in *Edward II* does Marlowe achieve subtlety and a dramatic development of character.

Such were the predecessors of Shakespeare whose art he inherited and in the next twenty years carried to such unbelievable heights. Perhaps no man was ever more fortunate than he in the time of his birth, for when he was thirty his potential rivals were dead or silent, and their gifts were at his feet. The influence of Lyly with his love of words is apparent in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*, of Peele in the graceful verse of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, of Greene in the humour of his histories, of Kyd in the horrors of *Titus Andronicus* and the revenge of *Hamlet*, of Marlowe in the intellectual arrogance of *Richard III*, in the 'reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty' in *Richard II*, and in verse such as this:

> Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again,
> Lash hence these overweening rags of France,
> These famished beggars, weary of their lives,
> Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
> For want of means, poor rats, had hanged themselves:
> If we be conquered, let men conquer us,
> And not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers
> Have in their own lands beaten, bobbed, and thumped,
> And in record left them the heirs of shame.

Perhaps it will be helpful to give a list of Shakespeare's predecessors, contemporaries, and successors, with the approximate dates of their

lives, for many of them are very uncertain, and of the periods of their greatest productivity:

Lyly	1554-1606	1584-1590
Peele	1557-1596	1588-1593
Greene	1558-1592	1587-1592
Kyd	1558-1594	1588-1594
Marlowe	1564-1593	1587-1593
Shakespeare	1564-1616	1590-1611
Chapman	1559-1634	1596-1613
Middleton	1570-1627	1599-1612
T. Heywood	1570-1641	1600-1638
Jonson	1572-1637	1597-1633
Dekker	1572-1632	1598-1630
Marston	1575-1634	1599-1613
Tourneur	1575-1626	1607-1613
Fletcher	1579-1625	1607-1625
Beaumont	1584-1616	1607-1614
Webster	1580-1625	1612-1623
Massinger	1583-1639	1620-1639
Ford	1585-1640	1620-1638
Shirley	1596-1666	1626-1660

Of Shakespeare's contemporaries Ben Jonson is certainly the best known, in more senses than one. He and Shakespeare must have been on very intimate terms, though there is nothing to suggest that either had much influence on the other as a dramatist, Shakespeare being nine years the older man and Jonson too independent to borrow from another; possibly too, being 'built far higher in learning' he had some contempt for the work of a man who, as he confided to Drummond of Hawthornden, 'wanted art'. However, according to Fuller, 'many were the wit-combats betwixt him (Shakespeare) and Ben Jonson', and Shakespeare acted in the original performances of Jonson's first comedy and first tragedy, *Every Man in his Humour*[1] (1598), and *Sejanus* (1603).

His taste for satire brought him into conflict with his contemporaries, for he ridiculed Dekker and Marston in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600) and *The Poetaster* (1601), both of which plays were acted by the Children of the Chapel. Dekker replied in his *Satiro-Mastix*, Marston in *What You Will*, but by 1604 the three men seem to have

[1] It has been suggested that the portrait of Shakespeare in the First Folio with Jonson's verses on the opposite page shows him in the character of Old Knowell in *Every Man in his Humour*.

been on the best of terms again.[1] Shakespeare appears to have been involved in the quarrel, for there is an interesting but obscure reference to him in the anonymous play, *The Return from Parnassus, Part II*, performed at Cambridge in 1601: Will Kempe, the comic actor of the Chamberlain's Men, is supposed to be speaking:

> Few of the university men pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, ay and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow, he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

In *The Poetaster* Horace gives Crispinus (Marston) pills that make him vomit 'terrible windy words', but what was the purge that Shakespeare gave Jonson is not at all clear.

Jonson's dramatic achievement is threefold: tragedy, comedy, masque. His two tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, cannot be said to want art, but they might be said to want nature. Carefully constructed in the classical manner, yet not too strictly so, for as he confesses, they are lacking 'in the strict law of time, and a proper chorus', they are frankly aimed at 'the reader extraordinary', and though they have a monumental nobility they have too a ponderosity, pedantry almost, that checks our sympathy. They are 'solid but slow' and lack the 'quickness of wit and invention' of Shakespeare's Roman plays.

In his creation of the 'comedy of humours' Jonson was a revolutionary. He explains what he means by 'humour':

> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
> In their confluctions, all to run one way,
> This may be truly said to be a humour.

Breaking away from the romantic comedy of Lyly and Shakespeare, with brutal realism and in 'language such as men do use', he depicted

> persons, such as comedy would choose,
> When she would show an image of the times,
> And sport with human follies, not with crimes.

[1] In 1604 Marston and Chapman were imprisoned for making uncomplimentary references to James I's countrymen in their comedy *Eastward Ho*, and Jonson, who had a hand in the play, 'voluntarily imprisoned himself' with them.

Jonson's characters, however, are caricatures, personifications of Evil rather than evil-doers; he attacks the Vice itself, Marston attacks the vicious. *Volpone*, *Epicene*, and *The Alchemist*, written at the height of his powers between 1605 and 1610, are among the great masterpieces of our literature.

With the accession of James I Jonson turned his attention to the masque, which in collaboration with Inigo Jones he may be said to have invented and perfected, his *Masque of Queens*, according to Swinburne, being 'the most splendid of all masques . . . one of the typically splendid monuments or trophies of English literature'. In later life he was the acknowledged literary dictator, surrounded by young writers whom he called his sons, and Poet Laureate in all but name. It was his ill luck to have been born at a time when he was overshadowed by a man even greater than he.

George Chapman's fame, such as it is to-day, is reflected rather than direct. He is supposed to have been the rival poet of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, mentioned particularly in Sonnet 86 for 'the proud full sail of his great verse' and for 'his spirit, by spirits taught to write above a mortal pitch'. He is even better known as the inspirer of Keats's famous sonnet *On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer*:

> Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
> That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
> Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
> Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.

Yet, as a poet, Chapman stands in no need of reflected glory: the thundering fourteeners of his translation of the *Iliad* still remain the best rendering of Homer into English verse:

> The host set forth, and poured his steel waves far out of the fleet,
> And as from air the frosty north wind blows a cold thick sleet
> That dazzles eyes, flakes after flakes incessantly descending;
> So thick, helms, curets, ashen darts, and round shields, never ending,
> Flowed from the navy's hollow womb.

As a dramatist, however, Chapman suffers from obscurity and pedantry; his plots are confused and his characterisation is weak, and yet 'of all the English play-writers', says Lamb, 'Chapman perhaps approaches nearest to Shakespeare in the descriptive and didactic, in passages which are less purely dramatic. Dramatic imitation was not his talent. He could not go out of himself, as Shakespeare could shift at pleasure, to inform and animate other existences, but in himself he had an eye to perceive and a soul to embrace all forms. . . . I have

often thought that the vulgar misconception of Shakspeare, as of a wild irregular genius "in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties" would be really true, applied to Chapman.' His best comedy is *All Fools*, his most popular tragedy *Bussy d'Ambois*, of which, however, Dryden wrote in a cruel passage:

> I have sometimes wondered, in the reading, what has become of those glaring colours which amazed me in *Bussy d'Ambois* upon the theatre; but when I had taken up what I supposed a fallen star, I found I had been cozened with a jelly; nothing but a cold, dull mass, which glittered no longer than it was shooting; a dwarfish thought, dressed up in gigantic words, repetition in abundance, looseness of expression, and gross hyperboles; the sense of one line expanded prodigiously into ten; and to sum up all, uncorrect English, and a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense; or, at best, a scantling of wit, which lay gasping for life, and groaning beneath a heap of rubbish.

That is the classical verdict against the romantic.

Marston and Middleton both worked with Chapman. Marston, like his own Malcontent, "gainst his fate repines and quarrels'; he is a misanthropist attacking the abuses and the people of his time. His comedy, such as *What You Will* and *The Dutch Courtezan*, derives from Jonson, but his satire is more personal than Jonson's, and his plays link the comedy of humours with the Restoration comedy of Congreve and Wycherley. There is poetry in his tragedies, *Antonio and Mellida* and *Sophonisba*, as well as vituperative rhetoric, but unlike his comedies they look back rather than forward, back to the melodrama and horrors of Kyd.

There is something of Marston in Middleton, but Middleton's realism and satire go deeper: there is more moral purpose in them, for there is more humanity, though perhaps less poetry. *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* is a realistic comedy of the seamy side of London life; his tragedy *The Changeling* has some of the best things in Elizabethan drama. *The Witch* is important for its relation to *Macbeth*, where the speeches of Hecate are certainly spurious, and almost certainly interpolated by Middleton.

On the other hand there is little of Marston in his colleague Dekker, who 'had poetry enough for anything', and a kindliness and charm, even in his satire, which is a pleasant contrast to the arrogance of Jonson and the bitterness of Marston. But he was, as Voltaire might well have said of him with more justice than of Shakespeare, an irregular genius: his poetry is rarely sustained—he is at his best in a lyric—and his plots are often muddled. *The Shoemaker's Holiday* is good-humoured realistic comedy, *Satiro-Mastix* is good-humoured

satire, and he must have chuckled as he drew Jonson as Horace toiling ponderously with a trifle:

> O me thy priest inspire,
> For I to thee and thine immortal name,
> In — sacred raptures flowing, flowing — swimming, swimming:
> In sacred raptures swimming,
> Immortal name, game, dame, tame, lame, lame, lame,
> — — hath, — shame, proclaim, oh?
> In sacred raptures flowing, will proclaim, not —
> O me thy priest inspire!
> For I to thee and thine immortal name,
> In flowing numbers filled with sprite and flame,
> (Good, Good!) In flowing numbers filled with sprite and flame.

The romance of *Old Fortunatus* is often pure Marlowe:

> Wish but for Beauty, and within thine eyes
> Two naked Cupids amorously shall swim,
> And on thy cheeks I'll mix such white and red,
> That Jove shall turn away young Ganymede,
> And with immortal arms shall circle thee.

But his masterpiece is *The Honest Whore*, of which Hazlitt wrote in the enthusiasm of discovery:

> Old honest Dekker's Signior Orlando Friscobaldo I shall never forget! I became only of late acquainted with this last-mentioned worthy character! but the bargain between us is, I trust, for life. . . . Simplicity and extravagance of style, homeliness and quaintness, tragedy and comedy, interchangeably set their hands and seals to this admirable production. We find the simplicity of prose with the graces of poetry. The stalk grows out of the ground; but the flowers spread their flaunting leaves in the air.

Thomas Heywood is as engaging and loveable as Dekker, and as industrious as he is modest. His preface to *The English Traveller* is worth quoting both for the light that it throws on him and on the contemporary drama:

> This tragi-comedy (being one reserved amongst 220 in which I had either an entire hand or at the least a main finger) coming accidentally to the press, and I having intelligence thereof, thought it not fit that it should pass as *filius populi*, a bastard without a father to acknowledge it: true it is that my plays are not exposed to the world in volumes, to bear

> the title of works (as others[1]): one reason is, that many of them by shifting and change of companies have been negligently lost. Others of them are still retained in the hands of some actors, who think it against their peculiar profit to have them come in print, and a third that it never was any great ambition in me to be in this kind voluminously read. All that I have further to say at this time is only this: censure I entreat as favourably as it is exposed to thy view freely.
>
> Ever studious of thy pleasure and profit,
>
> TH. HEYWOOD.

But of these 220 plays only one, *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, 'the first bourgeois tragedy of our Elizabethan literature', is remembered. It was with reference to this play that Lamb made his famous comment:

> Heywood is a sort of *prose* Shakspeare. His scenes are to the full as natural and affecting. But we miss the *Poet*, that which in Shakspeare always appears out and above the surface of *the nature*. Heywood's characters, his country gentlemen, etc. are exactly what we see (but of the best kind of what we see) in life. Shakspeare makes us believe, while we are among his lovely creations, that they are nothing but what we are familiar with, as in dreams new things seem old: but we awake, and sigh for the difference.

Heywood began writing for the theatre at about the time that Shakespeare was entering his tragic period; Beaumont, Fletcher, and Tourneur came into the field when he was emerging from the pity and terror of *Othello*, *Timon*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, and when James I had been on the throne for four years. The pleasure-loving Court of James and Anne of Denmark demanded spectacle and romance; the former was supplied by the masque—the Queen's masque at the Christmas of 1604 cost £3,000 and the costumes were those of courtezans rather than of Court ladies—and the latter was as liberally supplied by Beaumont and Fletcher. These two dramatists have an astonishing facility and inventiveness, and a lyric gift of the highest order, but they are decadents. There is no tragic conflict in their tragedies, and their popular tragi-comedies are little more than sentiment: they are soft and pretty, fibreless and effeminate when compared with the sincerity and manliness of their predecessors. They are adepts at tragedy without distress; like Bottom they have a device to make all well, they can aggravate their voices so that they can roar us as gently as any sucking dove, and it is easy to understand the long popularity of such plays as *The Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster*, which

[1] *i.e.*, Ben Jonson.

so skilfully deceive us into a belief that our passions are deeply stirred when they are but pleasantly tickled. In their hands, too, blank verse degenerates into a sweet surfeit of feminine endings:

> let all about me
> Tell that I am forsaken, do my face
> (If thou hadst ever feeling of a sorrow)
> Thus, thus, Antiphila, strive to make me look
> Like Sorrow's monument; and the trees about me,
> Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
> Groan with continual surges, and behind me
> Make all a desolation; look, look, wenches,
> A miserable life of this poor picture.[1]

'After all', Lamb remarks laconically, 'Beaumont and Fletcher were but an inferior sort of Shakespeares and Sidneys.'

Tourneur and Webster, too, may be degenerate, but if so they are degenerate in another way; if they are morbid they are never sickly; like Donne they have an excess of the Jacobean preoccupation with death; like Romeo and Hamlet they are fascinated by physical decay, and their work reminds us of the solemn and triumphantly elaborate tombs and trophies of the period. They reverted to the Tragedy of Revenge, to the melodrama of Kyd and the crude villainies discarded by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. Tourneur's plays, *The Atheist's Tragedy* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, are 'blood and thunder muddles', stuffed with unnatural vices but illuminated by dazzling flashes of poetry:

> Who'd sit at home in a neglected room,
> Dealing her short-lived beauty to the pictures?

and Vendice's address to the skull of his betrothed 'dressed up in tires':

> And now methinks I could e'en chide myself
> For doating on her beauty, though her death
> Shall be revenged after no common action.
> Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
> For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
> Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships
> For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?

And what shall we say of Webster? 'A Madame Tussaud Laureate'?

[1] Note how the pathos is piled on by placing the cæsura after an unstressed syllable: *forsaken, feeling, leafless, surges, desolation.*

His plays are chambers of horror indeed, but the figures are not wax-works:

> This is flesh and blood, sir;
> 'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
> Kneels at my husband's tomb.

A laureate, yes. He is the nearest to Shakespeare of them all, and in *The Duchess of Malfi* he is his peer. The duchess is the greatest tragic heroine in our literature outside Shakespeare; but then, whom in Shakespeare can we match with her?

> What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
> With diamonds? or to be smothered
> With cassia? or to be shot to death with pearls?
> I know death hath ten thousand several doors
> For men to take their exits; and 'tis found
> They go on such strange geometrical hinges
> You may open them both ways; any way, for Heaven sake,
> So I were out of your whispering. Tell my brothers
> That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
> Best gift is they can give or I can take.
> I would fain put off my last woman's fault,
> I'd not be tedious to you. . . .
> Pull, and pull strongly, for your able strength
> Must pull down Heaven upon me:—
> Yet stay; Heaven-gates are not so highly arched
> As princes' palaces; they that enter there
> Must go upon their knees.—Come, violent death,
> Serve for mandragora to make me sleep!—
> Go tell my brothers, when I am laid out,
> They then may feed in quiet.

> To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit; this only a Webster can do. Writers of an inferior genius may 'upon horror's head horrors accumulate', but they cannot do this. They mistake quantity for quality, they 'terrify babes with painted devils', but they know not how a soul is capable of being moved; their terrors want dignity, their affrightments are without decorum.[1]

After Webster the drama forgets the bright speed it had in the cradling heights of Marlowe and Shakespeare, and wanders sluggishly in the flats and valleys of Massinger, Ford, and Shirley. Not that

[1] Lamb: *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.*

there are not good things in these men: Massinger created the memorable Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Ford wrote *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and Shirley *The Traitor* and one of our most famous lyrics, 'The glories of our blood and state'. But the initial impetus has spent itself, inspiration has become imitation, the drama has become literary, the current turns on itself and sinks in the sand. 'Shirley claims a place amongst the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself, as that he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language, and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. A new language and quite a new turn of tragic and comic interest came in with the Restoration.'[1]

Shakespeare was never averse from borrowing anything that he thought worth while and that suited his purpose at the moment; his greatness does not lie in his originality—it is well known that he rarely invented a plot; but it was always the matter, the raw material, that he borrowed, never the manner; the transmutation, the fashioning of the work of art was his own. His early masters, it is true, were Lyly, Peele, Greene, Kyd, Marlowe, but he did not imitate them, and he soon outgrew them. From Jonson, the greatest of his contemporaries, he received little save perhaps a greater respect for form and precision, and the general stimulus of a brother dramatist of genius. Nor did Jonson receive anything more from Shakespeare: their minds, their methods, and objectives were so different. Shakespeare never attempted the comedy of humours: Jaques in *As You Like It* is his nearest approach to a 'humorous' character, and Nym makes fun of the whole business. Nor does he engage in the bitter satire of Jonson, or the savage realism of Marston, or the indignation of Middleton. He has the humorous tolerance of Chaucer, and his rare satire is gentle and humane: Holofernes, Bottom, Dogberry, Justice Shallow, Malvolio, are all treated with compassion, and here perhaps he is closest to Dekker. His only 'domestic' play is *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and for this he owes nothing to Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*. Nor did the cloudy metaphysics of Chapman attract him.

We cannot say that Shakespeare's plays would have been what they are had he written in isolation: of course he was influenced by his contemporaries, and part of the fascination of reading them lies in the perception of resemblances,[2] of the inevitable give and take of a

[1] Lamb: *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.*

[2] There are dangers in this. The siren voices of the disintegrators call from the rocks of resemblance, and it is advisable to lash oneself firmly to the mast of the First Folio and trust to the navigation of Heminge and Condell.

number of men working in the same medium. But equally we cannot say that any one play of Shakespeare as a whole is deeply indebted to any one of his contemporaries. We may see in a character, Falstaff, for example, a trace of Jonson, or we may occasionally hear in his verse the music of another poet, as Lamb recognised Tourneur's interwoven parentheses, but taken as a whole Shakespeare stands alone.

There is one possible exception to this. The collaboration of Beaumont and Fletcher began in 1607-8; between 1608 and 1612 Shakespeare wrote *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, and almost certainly worked with Fletcher, or at any rate had a hand in the romance of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, as well as in *Henry VIII*. Why did Shakespeare about the time of his retirement to Stratford turn to romance? Was it merely a natural evolution: the tragic vein played out, added to the influence of the Warwickshire countryside and family affection? Or was he exploiting the Courtly and popular demand for light entertainment? Or was he imitating Beaumont and Fletcher who certainly were? It is impossible to say, but it seems certain that after the spiritual and physical upheaval of a break with tragedy and with London Shakespeare would in any event turn to a new form, and here to hand was one that exactly suited his purpose. There was no imperative financial reason why he should supply a popular demand, but after all he was a King's Man whose plays were well known at Court, and masque and romance, where characterisation is relatively unimportant, were suitable mediums for the expression of his first love, poetry, to which he seemed to be returning; and what more natural than that he should make use of them?

There seems, then, no good reason to believe that Shakespeare was directly influenced by Beaumont and Fletcher. About this time Jonson gave part of his attention to the masque, Middleton abandoned realism for romance, Beaumont and Fletcher rarely wrote anything else; and Shakespeare wrote romances because he had left the theatre and wanted to write poetry. Though there are superficial resemblances between *Philaster* and *Cymbeline*, there is also a whole world of difference.

CHAPTER III

VERSE AND POETRY

IT will be helpful at the outset to divide Shakespeare's works into four well-defined chronological groups: first, his early work up to his prolonged visit to Stratford at the end of 1596; second, the period of comedy and historical-comedy from 1597 to the Essex rebellion at the beginning of 1601; third, up to the time of Shakespeare's permanent settlement at Stratford about 1610, the decade of the two bitter comedies and of the great tragedies, including the historical Roman tragedies; lastly, the period of the romances written partly in Stratford.

Poems.	*Comedies.*	*Histories.*	*Tragedies.*
I. 1590-1597.			
Venus & Adonis.	C. of Errors.	1 Hen. VI.	Tit. Andronicus.
Lucrece.	Two Gentlemen.	2 Hen. VI.	Romeo & Juliet.
Sonnets.	L. L. Lost.	3 Hen. VI.	
	M. N. Dream.	Rich. III.	
	T. of Shrew.	Rich. II.	
		K. John.	
II. 1597-1600.			
	M. of Venice.	1 Hen. IV.	
	Merry Wives.	2 Hen. IV.	
	Much Ado.	Henry V.	
	As Y. L. It.		
	12th Night.		
III. 1600-1609.			
	All's Well.	Julius Cæsar.	Hamlet.
	M. for Measure.	Ant. & Cleopatra.	Tr. & Cressida
		Coriolanus.	Othello.
			Timon.
			Lear.
			Macbeth.
IV. 1609-1612.			
	Pericles.	Henry VIII.	
	Cymbeline.		
	Winter's Tale.		
	Tempest.		

This division is instructive in many ways; it shows the young Shakespeare experimenting with many kinds of writing: in *Titus Andronicus* with the 'Revenge' type of play popularised by Kyd; in *1 Henry VI* possibly rewriting other men's work; collaborating, perhaps, in *The Taming of the Shrew*; and like Sidney and Spenser and everybody else with any pretensions to being a poet, composing a sonnet sequence; then leaving behind the models of Lyly and Greene, of Kyd and Marlowe, and rapidly evolving his own individual form and style until they emerge unmistakable and complete in the comedies and histories of the second period. It emphasises the concentration of the cynicism and tragedy in the opening years of the century, and of the romances in the final period.

Speaking generally, we can say that the first period is one of rhyming verse, the second of prose, and the third and fourth of blank verse. This, of course, is a very sweeping generalisation and must be taken relatively, for two-thirds of the hundred thousand lines of the plays are in blank verse, and there is more blank verse than rhyme in the first period, and much blank verse in the second; but the *proportion* of rhyme is highest in the first, the *proportion* of prose highest in the second; in the third and fourth periods blank verse is dominant, until in *The Winter's Tale*, apart from the Chorus and lyrics, there is no rhyme at all. Obviously one way of helping to date the plays is by comparing the proportion of rhyming verse, blank verse, and prose: the less rhyme, the later the play.

Indeed, the study of the development of Shakespeare's verse really began with the attempt to discover the order in which the plays were written. As early as 1758 Richard Roderick remarked on the large number of redundant final syllables in *Henry VIII*; then twenty years later Malone, in his *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written*, discovered that the frequency of rhyme and the infrequency of unstopped or run-on lines were indications of early work. But the serious study of metrical tests was not undertaken for another hundred years, when F. J. Furnivall founded the New Shakespeare Society, much of the early work of which was devoted to the subject. In 1874 F. G. Fleay published a table in the Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society showing for each play the total number of lines, the amount of prose, blank verse, rhyming pentameters, short line rhymes, songs, double endings, sonnets, and doggerel. Unfortunately the table was very inaccurate, and though he revised it, more reliable figures have been worked out on a percentage basis, notably by Professors König and Conrad.

The following table, taken from Morton Luce's *Handbook to Shakespeare's Works*, is based partly on the work of Fleay and König.

(The decimals should not be taken too seriously as they are deceptively suggestive of scientific precision when so much is the result of individual judgment.) Two or three typical plays from each period are included. The rhyme refers only to pentameter rhymes, excluding, that is, octosyllabic couplets, lyrics, and so on. Only in the second period does the amount of prose exceed the verse, while in the first there are three Histories with no prose at all. It is interesting to compare *Richard II* with *Henry IV*, *Love's Labour's Lost* with *Much Ado*, *Romeo and Juliet* with *Antony and Cleopatra*.

(See also p. 496)	Total Lines.	Prose.	Blank Verse.	Rhyme.	Percentage of Rhyme.	Feminine Endings.	Run-on Lines.	Speech Endings.
L. L. Lost ..	2789	1086	579	1028	62·2	7·7	18·4	10·0
Rich. II.. ..	2644	0	2107	537	18·6	11·0	19·9	7·3
Rom. & Jul. .	3002	405	2111	486	17·2	8·2	14·2	14·9
2 Hen. IV ..	3437	1860	1417	74	2·9	16·3	21·4	16·8
Much Ado ..	2823	2106	643	40	5·2	22·9	19·3	20·7
Hamlet	3924	1208	2490	81	2·7	22·6	23·1	51·6
Lear	3298	903	2238	74	3·4	28·5	29·3	60·9
Ant. & Cleo. ..	3964	255	2761	42	0·7	26·5	43·3	77·5
W's. Tale ..	2750	844	1825	0	0	32·9	37·5	87·6
Tempest ..	2068	458	1458	2	0·1	35·4	41·5	84·5

The percentage of rhyme is high in the plays of the early period because Shakespeare was still a poet rather than a dramatist, applying the rhyming poetry of *Venus and Adonis* and the *Sonnets* more ornamentally than dramatically to the framework of his plays, for he had yet to learn how to make his poetry organic and functional, to make of poetry a means to the dramatic end, to make them indeed indistinguishable. He was, in short, still writing dramatic poetry rather than poetic drama. Consider, for example, the undramatic though beautiful rhyming verse in sonnet-form of Romeo's love-making:

Romeo. If I profane with my unworthiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Juliet. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.
Romeo. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?
Juliet. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.
Romeo. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.
Juliet. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.
Romeo. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Compare this with love scenes in the later plays, Othello and Desdemona, Antony and Cleopatra, Ferdinand and Miranda, and the difference is at once apparent.

For certain effects Shakespeare used rhyme in all his plays: the lyrics, for instance, are as frequent in the later plays as in the earlier, and for the sake of contrast we have the rhyming verse of the Mouse-Trap scene in Hamlet, and of the Masque in *The Tempest*; and the last lines of the last play, Prospero's epilogue, are in rhyme. Again he uses the architectural device of definition, the defining of the units or members within the whole, clinching his scenes with a rhyming couplet, though this use of rhyme becomes rarer and rarer in the later plays until it disappears altogether.

Shakespeare uses prose mainly for comic scenes, particularly of course for the comic characters of low life, and this is as true of the last plays as of the first: from Launce, Costard, Bottom, Juliet's Nurse, through Falstaff, Mistress Quickly, Dogberry, Sir Toby Belch, to the Grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, the Porter in *Macbeth*, Autolycus, and Stephano. For the sake of dignity, contrast, and dramatic clarity the characters of the main plot usually talk in verse, those of the secondary plot in prose: thus Hero and Claudio, Henry IV, Lear (until he goes mad) and Cordelia, speak verse; Beatrice and Benedick, Falstaff, Gloucester and Edmund, often or always speak prose. Again, for the sake of contrast and dramatic accentuation of similar or parallel scenes one will be in prose, the other in verse: Benedick is gulled in prose, Beatrice in verse; Brutus speaks his funeral oration in prose, Mark Antony in verse. Then scenes depicting highly wrought states of mind and madness itself are generally written in prose: when Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep she talks prose, so does the mad Ophelia, and we can tell exactly when Lear's mind topples into madness by his change from verse to prose: "Hast thou given all to thy two daughters? And art thou come to this?" he demands of Edgar when he suddenly appears from the hovel disguised as a madman. There are other uses

of prose—letters, for instance, are often in prose—but its main use is for comic scenes, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the percentage of prose is so high in Shakespeare's second period, that of the comedies and historical-comedies.

But blank verse was to be the great vehicle of Shakespeare's mature style, verse in which language and character, poetry and drama are one, in which the poetic means and the dramatic end are indistinguishable. But the secret was not to be won without a struggle, and it is possible to follow his progress in the manipulation of his medium, not only the imaginative development but also the more mechanical development with which we are at the moment primarily concerned, so that there is no mistaking the verse of, say, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* for that of *Twelfth Night*, or the verse of *Julius Cæsar* for that of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

It must be remembered that blank verse was a new medium for English poetry, introduced by the Earl of Surrey in the sixteenth century and first applied to the drama in *King Gorboduc*, a play written two or three years before Shakespeare was born. Here are a few lines from that tragedy, and they are typical of the rest:

> Your age in quiet shall the longer last,
> Your lasting age shall be their longer stay.
> For cares of kings, that rule as you have ruled,
> For public wealth, and not for private joy,
> Do haste man's life and hasten crooked age,
> With furrowed face, and with enfeebled limbs,
> To draw on creeping death a swifter pace.

It will be observed that the structure of the verse is exceedingly regular: five iambic feet in every line, with the accent falling inexorably and with equal emphasis on every even-numbered syllable of the ten, a pause after the fourth syllable and another at the end of the line: that it is, in fact, intolerably wooden and monotonous.

The man who breathed life into this dead verse was Marlowe, whose 'mighty line' was a triumphant vehicle for the rhetoric of his titanic figures; but its mightiness was not altogether a virtue: save occasionally it was too massy and inflexible, neither subtle nor sensitive enough to record the less extravagant emotions and the complexities of change.

Perhaps Marlowe's most important contribution to the emancipation of dramatic blank verse from its iambic shackles was the imposition of a 'natural' rhythm on the artificial basic one, so imparting a contrapuntal effect to the verse by the interplay of the two. This he

did by giving an additional emphasis to some of the stressed syllables, generally to three of them, so that though the verse is still essentially iambic the rhetorical stresses override the metrical ones:

> Black is the beauty of the brightest day;
> The golden ball of Heaven's eternal fire,
> That danced with glory on the silver waves,
> Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams;
> And all with faintness, and for foul disgrace,
> He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
> Ready to darken earth with endless night.

Although Marlowe was born in the same year as Shakespeare, he died in 1593, the year in which Shakespeare published *Venus and Adonis*, bequeathing the powerful instrument of his passion to be perfected by his successors. Incidentally, Shakespeare was singularly fortunate in the date of his birth: the playwrights from whom he learned most and who would have been his rivals had they lived, all died at the beginning of his dramatic career: Greene in 1592, Marlowe in 1593, Kyd in 1594. Lyly survived until 1606, but wrote little after 1590.

Consider now a passage of Shakespeare's early blank verse: Clarence's description of his dream in *Richard III*:

> Lord, Lord! methought what pain it was to drown!
> What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!
> What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
> Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks:
> Ten thousand men that fishes gnawed upon;
> Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
> Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
> All scattered in the bottom of the sea.

The first five lines are absolutely regular with their ten syllables and five iambic feet; there is a pause or cæsura after the fourth syllable and another at the end of each line: the line indeed is the unit, each being complete in itself. The sixth line has an irregularity, the stress of the first foot being inverted in *Wèdges*, while in the next line there is a redundant syllable, the unstressed final syllable or feminine ending of *jewels*. These are the only exceptions to the iambic regularity of the basic scheme, but what saves the verse from the monotony of *Gorboduc* —we are considering not the poetry but the verse—is the Marlowesque rhythm, the metre being overridden by a three-stressed rhetorical rhythm, generally in the first, third, and fifth feet, though somewhat mechanically it must be confessed:

What úgly sights of déath within mine éyes!
Methóught I saw a thóusand fearful wrécks.

Now compare this with a similar passage written some four or five years later in *Henry IV Part* 2, where King Henry invokes Sleep:

O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds, and leavest the kingly couch
A watch-case or a common 'larum-bell?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deafening clamour in the slippery clouds,
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?

The iambic pattern is still regular, with here and there an inverted foot, as in *curling*, or a redundant syllable, as in *ruffian billows* and *slippery clouds*, making an anapæst out of an iambus; but the immense advance in fluidity is at once apparent. Not only is the pause varied within the line, the line itself is no longer the unit but a group of lines, within which the words slip from the end of one line into the next like water from one pool into another:

giddy mast
Seal up,

rock his brains
In cradle,

hanging them
With deafening clamour.

Compare this, again, with Macbeth's speech written seven or eight years later still:

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;

Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

Not even the group of lines is the unit now, for the sentences and clauses begin and end anywhere within the line, and the words do not so much glide over the end of the line as plunge into the profundity of the next. And the variations on the iambic theme! The shifting pauses, the inversions, the substituted feet, the subtle contrast of the feminine endings, and over all the unmistakable Shakespearean rhythm of the tragedies. Here we are approaching the frontiers, but in *King Lear* Shakespeare carried his verse to the final precipice beyond which lie mere wrecks of rhetoric:

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germins spill at once
That make ingrateful man!

The serene and less spectacular verse of *The Tempest* attains this same freedom within its metrical restraints:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Dramatic blank verse was brought to life by Marlowe, reached maturity with Shakespeare, and declined into senility with Fletcher. There are passages of Shakespeare's work in *Henry VIII*, but most of the play was undoubtedly written by Fletcher, whose sweet, enervated verse with its feminine endings and falling rhythms there is no mis-

taking for the vigorous and virile verse of Shakespeare. The dying Queen Katharine is speaking:

> After my death I wish no other herald,
> No other speaker of my living actions,
> To keep mine honour from corruption,
> But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.
> Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,
> With thy religious truth and modesty,
> Now in his ashes honour: peace be with him!
> Patience, be near me still; and set me lower:
> I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,
> Cause the musicians play me that sad note
> I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating
> On that celestial harmony I go to.

It is now possible to appreciate the significance of the last three columns in the table on p. 103, though it must be remembered that there are exceptions to the apparently simple and regular development of Shakespeare's verse: *The Taming of the Shrew*, for instance, has only 8% of run-on lines, and 1 *Henry IV* only 5% of feminine endings. However the progression is regular enough to afford for most of the plays internal evidence that agrees with any external evidence of date.

The feminine ending is the extra or 'redundant' unstressed syllable at the end of a line, usually that of a disyllabic or polysyllabic word, but sometimes, and with increasing frequency, an unstressed monosyllable. In the speech from *The Tempest* quoted above there are three examples of lines ending with unstressed final syllables: *actors*, *vision*, *faded*; in the Fletcher passage from *Henry VIII* there are six: *herald*, *actions*, *Griffith*, *lower*, *Griffith*, *meditating*, and in addition three unstressed final monosyllables: *made me*, *with him*, *go to*. Nine feminine endings in twelve lines, or 75%! In the whole play the percentage is 47: 12% and 14% higher than *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale* respectively, themselves considerably higher than any other play.

The number of run-on lines increases in something like the same proportion as the number of feminine endings; the passage from *The Tempest* has four examples, that from *Henry VIII* only two. It is difficult to define precisely a run-on line, for the end of the line usually coincides with some break in the grammar, however slight: *our little life—is rounded with a sleep; I sit meditating—on that celestial harmony.* Such a clear-cut example as *and are melted into air* is exceptional. When there is neither grammatical nor rhetorical break there can be no doubt; but when the two conflict it is best to let the ear decide and

to count it as a run-on line if the natural speech rhythm flows from one line into another. This of course makes the test a subjective one, and there are bound to be discrepancies in estimates: in *Love's Labour's Lost* König finds 8%, Hertzberg 4%; for *The Tempest* their figures are 35% and 32% respectively.

Related to the run-on line are the so-called 'weak' and 'light' endings. The *and* of *and are melted into air* is an example of the former, a line ending with a conjunction or preposition; a light ending is one that ends, more indefinitely, with a pronoun, auxiliary, or some other word with a comparatively light stress, as in Leontes's remarkable speech:

> Though I am satisfied and need no more
> Than what I know, yet shall the oracle
> Give rest to the minds of others, such as he
> Whose ignorant credulity will not
> Come up to the truth.

According to Professor Ingram there are in *Hamlet* 8 light and no weak endings; in *Antony and Cleopatra*, the longest play, 71 and 28 respectively. The percentage of light and weak endings together runs from 3·5 in the latter play to 5·5 in *The Winter's Tale*, and to 7·2 in Shakespeare's part of *Henry VIII*. In his part of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* there are 50 light and 34 weak endings, in Fletcher's 3 light and 1 weak; Shakespeare's run-on lines are 1 in 2, Fletcher's 1 in 5.

If there is an increase in the number of run-on lines it must mean that there is a corresponding increase in the number of mid-line pauses, unless the length of the rhetorical unit be extended so that the sense runs on to the end of the next line. Actually it is an important characteristic of Shakespeare's verse that after the prose period of the comedies and histories it breaks into smaller units: the clauses are shorter and elliptical, the sense tight-packed, the phrases broken by interjections, giving greater vigour and realism to the dialogue. The run-on line and the shorter speech unit therefore both make for an increase in the mid-line pause, at first after the second or third foot, later after the first or fourth foot as well. Sir Edmund Chambers gives the following percentage figures for strong pauses within 'unsplit' lines, that is lines spoken all by one character: *Love's Labour's Lost* 14, 2 *Henry IV* 15, *Hamlet* 26, *The Tempest* 42.

With the greater number of mid-line pauses we should expect an increase in the number of speeches that end within the line, which may either be left as a short line, or taken up and completed by the next speaker. The last column of the table shows the remarkable increase,

King. Thàt is to ſee how deepe my graue is made,
For with his ſoule fled all my worldly ſolace:
For ſeeing him, I ſee my life in death.
War. As ſurely as my ſoule intends to liue
With that dread King that tooke our ſtate vpon him,
To free vs from his Fathers wrathfull curſe,
I do beleeue that violent hands were laid
Vpon the life of this thrice-famed Duke.
Suf. A dreadfull Oath, ſworne with a ſolemn tongue:
What inſtance giues Lord Warwicke for his vow.
War. See how the blood is ſetled in his face.
Oft haue I ſeene a timely-parted Ghoſt,
Of aſhy ſemblance, meager, pale, and bloodleſſe.
Being all deſcended to the labouring heart,
Who in the Conflict that it holds with death,
Attracts the ſame for aydance 'gainſt the enemy,
Which with the heart there cooles, and ne're returneth,
To bluſh and beautifie the Cheeke againe.
But ſee, his face is blacke, and full of blood:
His eye-balles further out, than when he liued,
Staring full gaſtly, like a ſtrangled man:
His hayre vprear'd, his noſtrils ſtretcht with ſtrugling:
His hands abroad diſplay'd, as one that graſpt
And tugg'd for Life, and was by ſtrength ſubdude.
Looke on the ſheets his haire (you ſee) is ſticking,
His well proportion'd Beard, made ruffe and rugged,
Like to the Summers Corne by Tempeſt lodged:
It cannot be but he was murdred heere,
The leaſt of all theſe ſignes were probable.
Suf. Why Warwicke, who ſhould do the D. to death?
My ſelfe and *Beauford* had him in protection,
And we I hope ſir, are no murtherers.
War. But both of you were vowed D. Humfries foes,
And you (forſooth) had the good Duke to keepe:
Tis like you would not feaſt him like a friend,
And 'tis well ſeene, he found an enemy.
Queen. Than you belike ſuſpect theſe Noblemen,
As guilty of Duke *Humfries* timeleſſe death.

War.

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2 *Henry VI.* Part of p. 134 of *The Histories* in the First Folio.

particularly after 1600, of speeches that end before the conclusion of the line, from 7% in *Richard II* to 87% in *The Winter's Tale*. It is interesting to note the difference merely in the appearance of the printed page: the unbroken narrative or epic appearance of the verse of *Richard II* and the broken, dramatic appearance of that of *The Winter's Tale*. It is almost possible to date a play simply by looking at it.

The passages printed in chronological sequence at the end of this chapter are intended to illustrate the development of Shakespeare's verse as well as that of his poetry.

It is easy enough to analyse and dissect verse, to lay bare the ligaments that bind the parts, the muscles that give it motion, to expose the bone that determines its strength and stature, for verse is a patient that lies quietly enough on the critic's operating table. But it is another matter when it comes to analysing poetry, for here is a patient that cannot be etherised and pinned down: it is neither visible nor tangible; it can only be felt like the wind, or the heat from a fire, or the shock of an electric current; it is like trying to dissect a spirit, to analyse life itself; for poetry is a spirit, the life that informs the inert substance of verse, and indeed that informs all works of art.

Verse is metrical writing; but how shall we define poetry? It has been called 'the best words in the best order'; 'that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition'; 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'; 'the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds'; 'memorable speech'; 'great verse'. But such definitions are as evasive as the thing defined, and definition, the restriction within certain limits, is almost as difficult as analysis, for 'this capricious and untamed flyer' is too elusive to be contained within the bounds of a definition. Perhaps it is not very important, for we learn what poetry is by reading it, and we recognise it by feeling it.

It should, however, be possible to suggest why poetry has this power over us, why it can pierce us like a spear, and hale the souls out of our bodies. 'Tragedy', Aristotle tells us, 'is the imitation of an action'; and by imitation, *mimesis*, he does not mean the exact reproduction of an action, like that recorded in a news-film, but a representation, an approximation only to reality, an ordered and stylised—Greek tragedy was highly stylised—version of a more or less chaotic original. He meant precisely what Cézanne meant when he said, 'I have not tried to reproduce Nature: I have represented it'; or Mallarmé, 'Ce n'est pas avec les idées qu'on fair les sonnets, Degas; c'est avec les mots'. Degas should have known better, for he himself had said, 'The ballet-girl is merely a pretext for the design.'

All art is, in this sense, an imitation, a reproduction of, but not an equation with, some original; neither a photograph of daffodils, nor the daffodils themselves is a work of art, but Wordsworth's poem is. The photograph is an exact copy, or nearly so, of the original, the daffodils are the original itself; both stand single and are artistically impotent, but there is a duality about the poem, the relationship between the expression and the thing expressed, and this duality, or even multiplicity, is the essence of a work of art whatever the medium. The daffodils, and for that matter any subject under the sun, concrete and abstract, mountains and memories, houses and love, are charged with an energy that is powerless in isolation and can only be released by contact with, or rather by a certain critical relationship with, the artist, who expresses this relationship in his poem, or painting, or music, or whatever medium he works in. This does not mean, of course, that Wordsworth's poem is more beautiful than the daffodils that he saw dancing beside the lake, or that art is preferable to nature; it simply means that they are not the same thing, and are not to be confused with one another.

If on the one hand the subject of a work of art is artistically impotent in isolation, so on the other is expression abstracted from a subject. If the essence of a work of art is its duality, its relation to a subject, abstract art is a contradiction in terms, for by definition it is expression from which has been abstracted all elements of representation. Words, lines, notes, forms, without any mimetic significance, can no more be art than is a photograph or a daffodil. But most so-called abstract art is only an approximation, for it is almost impossible to produce any combination of lines or forms or sounds without some element of representation. James Joyce's prose is only an approximation:

> My hands are blawcauld between isker and suda like that piece of pattern chayney there lying below. Or where is it? Lying beside the sedge I saw it. Hoangho, my sorrow, I've lost it! Aimihi! With that turbary water who could see? So near and yet so far! But O, gihon! I lovat a gabber. I could listen to maure and moravar again. Regn onder river. Flies do your float. Thick is the life for mere.

When abstraction reaches its logical conclusion, as in some of Mr. Ben Nicholson's recent painting, it runs into the precise and dispassionate territories of science, those antiseptic and thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice where things have, or should have, but one meaning.

The movement towards abstraction, 'towards the condition of music', is, however, salutary, for it emphasises the importance of the

expression, that is, of the work of art itself, and the relative unimportance of the subject save as an original to which the poem or painting, music or sculpture, is related. For 'poetry is not the thing said, but a way of saying it', or rather it is the way of saying it *in relation to the thing said.* Better, one is almost tempted to say, a geometrical drawing than the 'accurate representation of what the grocer thinks he sees'.

All art is an imitation; but an imitation of what? Tragedy is an imitation of an action, so is all drama, so is ballet; sculpture is an imitation of 'a woman, a mountain, a horse', so is painting; music is the imitation of an emotion; architecture and ceramics are the imitation of a function and of a Platonic harmony of proportion. Poetry, in the restricted sense of great verse, is all these, the last being of necessity included in the others.

Of action:

> the oars were silver;
> Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
> The water which they beat to follow faster,
> As amorous of their strokes.

Of a woman:

> For her own person,
> It beggar'd all description: she did lie
> In her pavilion (cloth of gold of tissue),
> O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
> The fancy outwork nature.

Of an emotion:

> my way of life
> Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf.

It is also the imitation of a thought:

> we are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

But the point to note is that it is not the action, the woman, the emotion, the thought, described or represented that really matters, but the way in which they are represented; it is the words that matter, the words, their sounds, their undertones and overtones of meaning, their combination, their rhythm; but the words in relation to the

subject, of which we are at the same time aware, though perhaps only dimly, and what exactly it is scarcely concerns us, so that subject and expression are as it were fused and transfigured into something rich and strange, and instead merely of seeing Cleopatra in her barge, of feeling Macbeth's melancholy, or apprehending Prospero's commonplace thought, we are surprised by a novel and exciting relationship, and experience a new and thrilling emotion quite unlike the everyday ones of joy and gladness, an exaltation which we may call the æsthetic emotion.

The genesis of a work of art, then, seems to be the recognition by the artist of a significant relationship between the subject of his passionate contemplation and his medium if arranged in a certain way; and the work of art itself is the expression of this significant relationship. It is as though two poles charged with electricity were, *at a certain critical distance from each other*, to discharge their energy in a brilliant flash, bridging the gap between them, and creating out of the duality a new and illuminating unity. It is this resolution of a duality that, in the words of Coleridge, gives to the reader of poetry 'that pleasurable emotion, that peculiar state and degree of excitement, which arises in the poet himself in the act of composition'.

This resolution of a duality, or recognition of unity, is the important thing, for man is by nature imitative and is, consciously or unconsciously, ever searching for resemblances, trying to establish new relationships and to rediscover old ones. There is nothing remarkable in this, for an object has its full significance only in relation to its environment: a curve must be related to a straight line, one colour to other colours, man to his fellow-men and to nature (compare Thomas Hardy), a word, a phrase, a thought, to its context. Simple examples of our delight in recognition are the popular appeal of Baroque angels and Madame Tussaud's waxworks, and the general appreciation of a portrait by its 'likeness' to the original. More profound and mysterious is the symbolism of dreams, the recognition, common to all men, in our unconscious minds of similarity in dissimilarity: thus in dream symbolism the human body is a house, parents are kings and queens, children are little animals or vermin,[1] birth is related to water, and dying to a journey,[2] while there is an almost inexhaustible range of sexual symbolism.

[1] See Swift's *Voyage to Brobdingnag*.

[2] Compare Bishop King's lovely poem, *The Exequy*, in which he describes his longing to join his dead wife, in the figure of a journey:

> But hearkl My Pulse, like a soft Drum
> Beats my approach, tells Thee I come;
> And slow howere my marches be,
> I shall at last sit down by Thee.

Obvious examples in art are harmony and counterpoint in music; in architecture, the sweeping together into a unity by means of one dominating feature of the members that would otherwise compete for attention, as the dome of St. Paul's reconciles and unifies the subordinate elements of the cathedral. More profound again is the importance in tragedy, as in the *Œdipus*, of the Recognition scene which, according to Aristotle, is one of the two 'most powerful elements of emotional interest in tragedy'. And allied to recognition is reconciliation, the theme of Shakespeare's last romantic plays. Two of his most moving scenes, it will be admitted, are the reconciliation of Lear and Cordelia, and the recognition of Pericles and Marina.

Whether this delight in resemblance, relationship, recognition, reconciliation, resolution, harmony, proportion, unity, call it what we will, is ultimately sexual in origin, the desire for physical union, and therefore an aspect of spiritual union or love, or whether it is the expression of the desire of the individual 'to enter more closely into communion with humanity' through the collective unconscious, or both, or possibly neither, does not concern us here, but the realisation that this delight in resemblance and unity is fundamental in all art does concern us in the study of Shakespeare's poetry.

In verse this principle of recognition and reconciliation in its most elementary form can be appreciated in the technical devices of rhyme, alliteration, and assonance, where the repetition of similar sounds delights the ear:

> The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
> Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver. . . .

Metre is more complex; sheer repetition of the same pattern of slacks and stresses is merely wearisome; the delight lies in the variation on the basic theme, the mounting of a secondary rhythm on the primary or basic one, always approaching, sometimes coinciding, but ever slipping elusively away, so that the effect is contrapuntal. In the lines quoted above, for example, the iambic foot is reversed at the beginning of the second and third lines—*Burned on* and *Purple*—incidentally emphasising the alliteration and assonance of the passage. Of course these devices will not of themselves transmute verse into poetry, indeed if unskilfully used they will be unpleasant, but in the hands of a poet they may have a powerful cumulative effect.

'What is it?' Professor Housman asks, 'in these six simple words of Milton—

Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more—

what is it that can draw tears, as I know it can, to the eyes of more readers than one? What in the world is there to cry about? Why have the mere words the physical effect of pathos when the sense of the passage is blithe and gay? I can only say, because they are poetry, and find their way to something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire.'

And again, what is the secret of 'the supremest gift of language, that gift of the magic and evocatory phrase, which', as Logan Pearsall Smith says, 'has made Shakespeare the master-magician of the world'? And he quotes from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

The uncertain glory of an April day.

And from *Timon*:

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat
Thy grave-stone daily.

These are simple examples, literal statements, without the complexities of formal imagery, yet they flash upon us with the intensity of a revelation of truth, and we realise that *uncertain glory* is the inevitable and perfect complement of *April day*, and that the epithet *light*, with its double significance of lightness and whiteness, its iteration of *lie*, the assonance of *foam-stone*, *sea-beat*, *may-grave-day*, exactly express Timon's desire to be where the sea, the symbol at once of birth and death, shall lightly cover him and weep on his low grave. The rhythm of this passage, too, will repay attention, for it plays a large part in the total effect. Observe how the verse is checked in the first half of the line by the stresses on *lie where*, *light foam*, and released in the rushing *of the sea*, then the steady measure (accentuated by the assonantal *sea-beat*) of *may bēat thy grāve*, and the falling cadence of *stone daily*. It is, in fact, the rhythm of a wave breaking on a sandy beach.

But language like this is raised from the plane of verse to that of poetry by something more powerful than craftsmanship and technical devices, however brilliantly employed, and it is not altogether satisfactory to say that we know that by its perfection it illuminates and reveals a fraction of ultimate reality, or truth, or beauty. We know that it does so, yet there is a missing mean. Perhaps the explanation lies in the powerful employment of onomatopœia; not its simple and surface application as in:

> The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
> With busy hammers, closing rivets up,

but its working in the unplumbed depths of the unconscious mind. Far more words are onomatopœic in origin than is generally realised, their roots sunk deep in the remote times when prehistoric men began to evolve a language from sounds that were suggestive of the thing described or of the thought or emotion they struggled to express. Certain sounds, and combinations of sounds, therefore, must have an elemental significance of which we are not consciously aware, sounds which are echoed and partially reproduced in words like *lie*, *light*, *foam*, *sea*, *beat*, *grave*, *stone*, *day*, *glory*. I am suggesting that as there is a visual symbolism in dreams there is in language an aural symbolism lying deep in the unconscious, and fully operative and evocatory only when experienced in the semi-hypnotic condition induced by verse, and to a lesser degree by rhythmical prose such as that of the Bible and Sir Thomas Brown. The poet feels the compulsion to employ these elemental symbols in the delicate form of words arranged in a certain order and set to their appropriate rhythm, and the reader experiences with a shock of delight the significant relationship between the words and 'something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire'. If this is so it will explain the magic of poetry even when devoid of formal imagery—and simile and metaphor, as Professor Housman reminds us, are things inessential to poetry.

Shakespeare is, above all others, the master of the 'magic and evocatory phrase', and his poetry is full of lines luminous and inevitable and ultimate. We may pick almost at random:

> Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme.
>
> Sound all the lofty instruments of war.
>
> Of moving accidents by flood and field.
>
> Light thickens; and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood;
>
> And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corse,
> Lying with simple shells.

In his essay on Keats, Robert Bridges writes of

> The highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the æsthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time astonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it. . . . Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these—
>
> 'My way of life
> Is faln into the sear, the yellow leaf.
>
> Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.'

But these last two quotations differ from those already given in that their effect is dependent largely upon the complexities of metaphor.

Now, it is true that simile and metaphor are things inessential to poetry, but it is equally true that the successful employment of imagery immensely intensifies the effect of poetry; as in verse a secondary emotional rhythm is mounted on the primary one to form a new and harmonious unity, so the sensuous imagery of simile and metaphor is mounted on the primary though more shadowy and remote imagery suggested by the words themselves. Once again the same principle of harmony and unity is at work: the delighted recognition of the relation of the imagery in the simile and metaphor to the theme as a whole, and of the image to its immediate object.

> 'The greatest thing of all by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learned from others: and it is also a sign of original genius, since a good metaphor implies the intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.'

The words are Aristotle's, and when Robert Bridges describes Shakespeare as 'the greatest master of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point' he is thinking primarily of his use of metaphor. And Sir Walter Raleigh, of all English critics since Johnson the most cautious and the least given to superlatives:

> If there is one mark which more than another distinguishes Shakespeare's mature style from all other writing whatsoever, it is his royal wealth of metaphor.

'From all other writing whatsoever.' And Logan Pearsall Smith:

> This unparalleled wealth of imagery shows itself, above all, in that royal use of metaphor, which is the most distinguishing quality of his style.

And we find the same testimony if we go back to Coleridge, with whom the study of Shakespeare's imagery begins. Of the youthful author of *Venus and Adonis* he writes:

> And still mounting the intellectual ladder, he had as unequivocally proved the indwelling in his mind of imagination, or the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one;—that which afterwards showed itself in such might and energy in Lear, where the deep anguish of a father spreads the feeling of ingratitude and cruelty over the very elements of heaven;—and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feeling, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its principle and fountain, who is alone truly one.

But this 'royal wealth of metaphor' was the inimitable quality of Shakespeare's mature style; it was not his to begin with, but developed with his dramatic power. Coleridge was perhaps only being wise after the event, for there is nothing very remarkable or individual about the imagery of the early poems, and little to distinguish it from that of his contemporaries. Keats was twenty-one when he wrote *Endymion*, twenty-three when he wrote *Hyperion*, and died when he was only twenty-five. Shakespeare was twenty-nine when he wrote *Venus and Adonis*, which may be compared with *Endymion*, and can scarcely be said to approach the sublimity of *Hyperion*. Jeffrey's review of *Endymion* might, indeed, be applied with equal justice—and injustice—to *Venus and Adonis*:

> The thin and scanty tissue of his story is merely the light framework on which his florid wreaths are suspended; and while his imaginations go rambling and entangling themselves every where, like wild honeysuckles, all idea of sober reason, and plan, and consistency, is utterly forgotten, and 'strangled in their waste fertility'.

It is important to remember that Shakespeare was a poet before he was a dramatist: he was a poet born, and a dramatist by profession—fortunately, for it is possible that without the stimulus of the stage he would never have developed the dazzling hieroglyphical language which distinguishes him from all other poets.

In *Venus and Adonis*, despite its ostensible passion and hot-house

atmosphere, there is a paradoxical frigidity: Hazlitt called this poem and *Lucrece* 'a couple of ice-boxes, as hard, as glittering, and as cold'. This, no doubt, is partly the result of the stiff, conventional, and artificial imagery which was the fashionable and common property of the Elizabethans, of Sidney, Spenser, and the University Wits, and which has a certain wiry charm, in particular of the veneer of red and white with which they are enamelled: 'Rose-cheek'd Adonis'; 'More white and red than doves and roses are'; 'Making them red and pale with fresh variety'; ''Twixt crimson shame, and anger ashy-pale: being red she loves him best: and being white, her best is better'd with a more delight'; 'red cheeks and fiery eyes'; 'lily fingers'; 'Within the circuit of the ivory pale'; 'How white and red each other did destroy'; 'claps her pale cheek till clapping makes it red'; 'a lily prisoned in a gaol of snow, or ivory in an alabaster band'; 'crimson liveries'; 'coral mouth', 'whereat a sudden pale, Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose'; 'Like milk and blood being mingled both together'; 'whose wonted lily white With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drench'd.' The list is by no means exhaustive, but at the end of the poem to emphasise this antithesis there is the symbolic flower that springs from Adonis's blood:

> And in his blood, that on the ground lay spill'd,
> A purple flower sprung up, chequer's with white;
> Resembling well his pale cheeks and the blood
> Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

A similar and possibly longer list might be compiled from *Lucrece*. This opposition of red and white, however, becomes something more than a conventional usage, and the two colours run like threads through the warp of his early poetry, sometimes with miraculous effect:

> Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
> Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;

and,

> beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

Characteristic of his early style, both in prose and verse, is his euphuism, Lyly's golden legacy, with its classical allusions, unnatural history, and equally unnatural wordplay, a quaintly pedantic yet

humorously self-conscious style which at its best is something more than merely charming, though rarely dramatic:

> Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
> Than are the tender horns of cockled snails;
> Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:
> For valour, is not love a Hercules,
> Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
> Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
> As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair.

At its worst it is merely tedious.

The young Shakespeare, it will be observed, is never in a hurry. He can always find time to play with a word that takes his fancy, to spin it in the air, to bandy it about, admire its slippery meanings, and only discard it when a new one catches his eye. 'A quibble', Dr. Johnson complains, 'is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. . . . A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.' And sometimes with a perverse and deadly pedantry he sc frets and worries a conceit that it collapses from sheer exhaustion all its initial energy gone, leaving so much lifeless matter in his verse.

The difference between Shakespeare's youthful and mature style is largely a matter of speed. His early characters, like the author himself, insist on savouring to the full the delicious implications of a language recently and continually enriched by exotic and exciting words newly imported from all the quarters of the globe, and the action must wait. Progress is leisurely, rarely more strenuous than a stroll, for as yet the poetry, not the play, is the thing. So the imagery is slowly unfolded, often in the expansive form of a simile, and when metaphor is used it is more often in the nature of a conceit than concentrated into a single word:

> Many a morning hath he there been seen,
> With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
> Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs:
> But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
> Should in the farthest east begin to draw
> The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
> Away from light steals home my heavy son.

Or:

Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs;
Being purg'd, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;
Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears:
What is it else? a madness most discreet,
A choking gall and a preserving sweet.

The progress is that of a pageant or the stately measure of a pavane; the poetry is lovely and lyrical, but it is scarcely dramatic; the imagery is non-functional and suspended in wreaths from the framework of his story. Lamb's criticism of Fletcher might almost be applied to this early verse: 'He lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately that we see where they join.'

Love's Labour's Lost and *Romeo and Juliet* contain some of the most beautiful poetry in our language. Consider the opening of *Love's Labour's Lost*:

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
And then grace us in the disgrace of death:
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavour of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
And make us heirs of all eternity.

And as illustration we should have to quote almost the whole of *Romeo and Juliet*. But poetry like this is a medium that can be applied in drama only to a limited range of subject-matter. The static and monumental style is more suited to the artificial and non-dramatic form of the sonnet, and had Shakespeare written nothing but his sonnet sequence he must still have ranked as our greatest lyric poet.

It was Stevenson who first remarked the peculiar emotive power of the letters *p*, *b*, *v*, *f*, and certainly in the sonnets—and the early plays—they are used in a way that gives the sequence a musical unity and a pervading atmosphere of the pride of youth and spring, tinged with a melancholy recognition of the transience of beauty:

Calls back the lovely April of her prime. . . .
With all triumphant splendour on my brow. . . .
'Gainst death, and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praise shall still find room,
Even in the eyes of all posterity. . . .
Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
So far from variation or quick change? . . .
Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
Bound for the prize of all too precious you. . . .

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything. . . .
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,
In praise of Ladies dead, and lovely Knights. . . .
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring.

This atmosphere of pride and pomp, qualities common to youth and death, is emphasised by the imagery which suggests the bright heraldic colouring of a pageant or of a funeral trophy:

Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring. . . .
Thy youth's proud livery so gaz'd on now. . . .
Kissing with golden face the meadows green. . . .
Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of Princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme. . . .
Your monument shall be my gentle verse. . . .
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best.

It is perhaps significant that *Love's Labour's Lost* begins with a reference to death and brazen tombs, and that the last scene of *Romeo and Juliet* takes place in a funeral monument:

I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave.—
A grave? O, no! a lantern, slaughter'd youth,
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light.

But even in the early plays there are men of action who, impatient of the leisurely progress of events and exasperated by the gossips and chatterboxes like Capulet and York and by the word-spinning of tragic heroes such as Romeo and Richard II, begin to force the pace: Biron, Mercutio, Bolingbroke, Faulconbridge, and then Hotspur, Benedick and Henry V. Shakespeare has to kill Mercutio, a bull in his delicate china-shop, but the others are importunate; the action quickens, there is less time for set lyrical pieces—though occasionally Shakespeare insists—and he is driven to apply the poetry to the characters themselves and to the furtherance of the action. He even forces himself to write prose to avoid the temptation of sunrises and roses, subjects which he never was able to resist, and as a deliberate exercise in a more realistic medium. His characters mock him and his sonnets: 'Tush, none but minstrels like of sonneting', says Biron. 'When shall

you see me write a thing in rhyme?' And Mercutio: 'Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in: Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen-wench.' And Hotspur:

> I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
> Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers:
> I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,
> Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree;
> And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
> Nothing so much as mincing poetry:
> 'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag.

He even mocks himself and his use of the stiff childish imagery, drawn not from observation but from the fashionable poets of the period, the symbolic lilies and roses, metals and precious stones:

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks.
> And in some perfumes is there more delight
> Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

When Yeats grew old, the world of nature, with its joys from which he was separated by the years, and its cruel reminders of mortality, became intolerable, and he describes how 'sick with desire' he had 'sailed the seas and come to the holy city of Byzantium', the city of artifice where birds are made

> Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
> To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium.

But Shakespeare as a young man set sail in the opposite direction, *from* Byzantium, its gold, enamels, and mosaics, through the mackerel-crowded seas to the country where real birds sang upon real boughs. He never forgot the holy city: Hamlet, for instance, seems to be thinking of it when he says: 'This most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire.' And Iachimo:

> The roof o' the chamber
> With golden cherubims is fretted: her andirons
> (I had forgot them) were two winking Cupids
> Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely
> Depending on their brands.

And Prospero's magic island is not very far from that 'dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea'.

From 1596 to 1600 we can watch Shakespeare's progress from poet to dramatist, or rather from lyric poet to dramatic poet. The transition was accomplished, curiously enough, partly by the use of prose which, though itself often the artificial euphuism of Lyly, was essentially a dramatic medium: it was unsuitable for lyrical digressions, and had to be applied to character and action. As a result of this discipline his verse becomes functional and organic, it is no longer a detachable ornament, it *is* the character, it *is* the action, which is what Granville-Barker means when he says that the actor must 'impersonate Lear and the storm together, by identifying Lear's passion with the storm's.' And again, in spite of its artificiality, prose taught Shakespeare a simpler, almost colloquial form of verse, a much more flexible instrument than the stiff and stilted language of his early plays; indeed, as in *Much Ado*, the verse is sometimes more simple and natural than the prose. This easy, almost placid, style is seen at its best perhaps in *Julius Cæsar*:

> My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
> I found no man but he was true to me.
> I shall have glory by this losing day,
> More than Octavius and Mark Antony
> By this vile conquest shall attain unto.

There is a change too in the imagery, from the merely conventional to that drawn from Shakespeare's own observation; in addition to the little world of art the whole world of sense is pressed into service. We can see the conflict between the two in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> Hoary-headed frosts
> Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
> And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
> An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
> Is, as in mockery, set.

And even as late as *Much Ado About Nothing*:

And bid her steal into the pleached bower
Where honey-suckles ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter: like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride,
Against that power that bred it. . . .
The pleasantst angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream
And greedily devour the treacherous bait.

Simile, the more diffuse, lyrical, and less dramatic comparison is at first favoured, but it is a comparison drawn from nature:

As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his followers fly.

Then metaphor becomes commoner, though often scarcely to be distinguished in its application from simile:

Lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once obtains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

It is a leisurely method and just a little clumsy. Even in *Hamlet* we have:

I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and thrill sounding throat
Awake the god of day.

But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.

But this is more typical:

O! such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul; and sweet religion makes

A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Hamlet is the great landmark in Shakespeare's progress: it stands like a rock exactly in the middle of his career, a point of arrival and at the same time a point of departure. It is not simply that in *Hamlet* we come closer to Shakespeare than in any other play. It is a point of arrival because it is the culmination of the style which with the aid of prose he had evolved from the lyrical drama, unequal yet in speed and concentration it is true, for there are diffuse, slow-moving and extra-dramatic passages, but the rest is packed with thought and feeling flashing in images of unforgettable intensity. Above all, the character is born of the verse, hewn out of the poetry, or rather language has become a plastic medium in which Shakespeare models his characters and quickens them with his imagery. The distance covered in the six or seven years after writing *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* is immense, and may be gauged by comparing the characters of Romeo and Hamlet, two not dissimilar characters—Hazlitt said that Romeo was Hamlet in love. But Romeo is little more than a shadow cast upon a background of poetry, Hamlet is the substance and the poetry combined.

Shakespeare did indeed seem to pause after writing *Hamlet*, as if he were himself aware that he had come half way, and of the significance of the play as a landmark. He was probably tired after the strain of writing two plays a year for twelve years, and may well have hesitated before resuming his voyage 'on strange seas of thought alone'—far stranger and more lonely seas than any he had yet embarked on; but it seems that he was not altogether satisfied. He had developed a mannerism. A brilliant form of imagery of which he had become increasingly fond had got out of control and threatened to become mere caricature. The following passage could come out of no play but *Hamlet*:

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;

That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Six pairs in eight lines! Three pairs of adjectives: *deject and wretched*, the Latin and the Saxon; *noble and sovereign*, two Latin words; *out of tune and harsh*, Latin and Saxon again. And then the nouns: *glass of fashion and the mould of form*, the concrete Saxon *glass* and *mould* contrasting with and intensifying the Latin abstractions; *form and feature*, the general reinforced by the particular; above all, *expectancy and rose*, the polysyllabic Latin abstraction vivified by its association with the short and concrete Saxon word, the idea reconciled with the image. The whole passage is a complex of the sensuous and intellectual, of the concrete and the abstract, Saxon and Latin; and through it run the concepts of expectancy, fashion, manners, reason, youth, and madness, set off by, and at the same time heightening the value of, the imagery of the rose, glass, mould, honey, music, bells, and back again to the rose now blown. Nor is the image all visual: honey is an imaginative appeal to the palate, music and bells to the ear. Never before had there been poetry like this in English; no wonder that Shakespeare in the excitement of writing a tragedy which absorbed all his faculties overlooked the fact that he was gaining his effect largely by the repetition of the same device which, once he had discovered it, became an unconscious and automatic form of expression. We can trace the development of the mannerism in the plays that precede *Hamlet*; thus, in *The Merchant of Venice* we have: *due and forfeit of my bond, the husbandry and manage of my house, dread and fear of kings*, and the fine *force and road of casualty*, and *chaff and ruin of the times*. In *Much Ado: sign and semblance of her honour, authority and show of truth, grey hairs and bruise of many days*. In *Julius Cæsar: such ferret and such fiery eyes, signed in thy spoil and crimsoned in thy Lethe, domestic fury and fierce civil strife, show and promise of their mettle, bound in shallows and in miseries*. In *Twelfth Night: of what validity and pitch soe'er, but falls into abatement and low price, light airs and recollected terms, the spinsters and the knitters in the sun, this accident and flood of fortune*. But in the first Act of *Hamlet* we have: *fair and warlike form, sensible and true avouch, gross and scope of my opinion, strict and most observant watch, covenant and carriage of the article designed, post-haste and romage, high and palmy state, extravagant and erring spirit, disjoint and out of frame, gentle and unforced accord, rank and gross, dead vast and middle of the night, perfume and suppliance of a minute, voice and yielding of that body, shot and danger of desire, morn and liquid dew of youth, steep*

and thorny way, puffed and reckless, rank and station, select and generous, free and bounteous, sanctified and pious bawds, pith and marrow of our attribute, pales and forts of reason, ponderous and marble jaws, sulphurous and tormenting flames, knotted and combined locks, gates and alleys of the body, thin and wholesome blood, vile and loathsome crust, luxury and damned incest, youth and observation, book and volume of my brain, business and desire, love and friending; and this list is by no means exhaustive.

This mannerism has been insisted on as it adds to the play a third quality, that of style, which, together with those of character and of imagery, drawn largely from sickness and disease as Dr. Caroline Spurgeon has shown, gives it a peculiar emphasis and distinction. It is incidentally useful in helping to date the plays. The dates both of *All's Well that Ends Well* and of *Troilus and Cressida* are disputed; but the first with its *catastrophe and heel of pastime* must belong to the *Hamlet* period, and *wind and tempest of her frown* one would at once attribute to *Hamlet*, though in fact it is *Troilus and Cressida.*

It really does seem as though Shakespeare became conscious of the overworking of this device of pairing words and phrases, and though in *Troilus and Cressida*, almost certainly his next play, he employs it—*vaunt and firstlings of those broils, checks and disasters, bias and thwart, pale and bloodless emulation, sinew and the forehand of our host, swing and rudeness of his poise, pride and salt scorn of his eyes*—it is less frequent and obtrusive, and its use becomes rarer as Shakespeare achieves the same effect by other means.[1]

It has already been suggested that the difference between Shakespeare's early and mature styles is a matter largely of speed. In *Romeo and Juliet* the pace is leisurely, not so much the pace of the action as of the verse which flows independently on a plane above that of the action; which is only another way of saying that the speech is by no means always dramatic. Not only this, but the verse itself, its ideas and images—Romeo's last speech is exceptional—moves with the stateliness of a swan in unruffled waters. In *Hamlet* the verse is geared to the action, or rather the verse is the action, for what Hamlet says or thinks is as important dramatically as what he does, or fails to do. Though his soliloquies end in a stalemate or at best in a resolution, they advance the action by their revelation of character and motive;

[1] It is worth observing one of its uses in *Antony and Cleopatra*, in Enobarbus's dying speech:

> Throw my heart
> Against the *flint and hardness of my fault*,
> Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
> And finish all foul thoughts.

his speech is dynamic, a development; but Romeo's eloquence is an eddy without progression. This is, no doubt, an over-statement and an over-simplification, but compare soliloquies of Romeo and Hamlet and the difference is apparent:

Romeo. Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp: her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O! that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

Hamlet. Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn,
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

Romeo elaborates one image, Hamlet jumps from image to image impelled by a sort of emotional logic, until finally the mounting heat and pressure of his imagination fuses the images of a falcon and of a river losing itself in the sand. Romeo's is the concentric method of the conceit, expanding like a bubble about its centre; Hamlet's imagery is centrifugal, flying off from the centre like sparks from a catherine wheel, 'images that yet fresh images beget'. 'Shakespeare mingles everything', says Lamb, 'he runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure.' The verse of *Hamlet*, however, is not always as closely knit as this, but as Shakespeare writes his great series of tragedies, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, we note the gathering concentration and momentum of his verse in which, as Gray said, 'every word is a picture':

> Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast;—

The image is packed into a single word: pity rides, ambition vaults, business is masked, the mind is tortured, memory is a warder, life a fever, death is dusty, a shadow, an actor, an idiot's tale; and Lady Macbeth asks,

> Was the hope drunk
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since,
> And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
> At what it did so freely?

Of this extraordinary reproduction of images by fission Hazlitt writes:

> His language abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed metaphors, which are only abbreviated forms of speech. These, however, give no pain from long custom. They have, in fact, become idioms in the language. They are the building, and not the scaffolding to thought. We take the meaning and effect of a well-known passage entire, and no more stop to scan and spell out the particular words and phrases, than the syllables of which they are composed.

And this, as Mr. Middleton Murry has observed, is because 'we have not, and we are not intended to have, time to unfold his metaphors. . . . His success, when we examine it, is not really so surprising, for the extent to which images are discordant depends upon the extent to which we unfold them, and that is wholly within the great poet's control, for it in turn depends primarily upon the rhythm and tempo of his writing.' Part of the secret, then, of Shakespeare's style is this perfect adjustment of speed to imagery; in the early verse we have time to unfold and are expected to examine the elaborated figures; and when, as nearly always in his later poetry the speed is both the product of and the energy that generates the imagery, there can be no question of discordancy.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* the imagery is richer, but the transitions less dazzling. On the other hand the language is even more compact and massy, an elliptical and compressed style, as though Shakespeare, impatient of words that added nothing to the almost plastic expression of his imagination, rejected them and compelled the remainder into any kind of service:

> Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome, and see
> Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
> His corrigible neck, his face subdued
> To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat
> Of fortunate Cæsar, drawn before him, branded
> His baseness that ensued?

and,

> It is great
> To do that thing that ends all other deeds,
> Which shackles accidents, and bolts up change;
> Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,
> The beggar's nurse and Cæsar's.

In *Antony and Cleopatra* language almost bursts its bonds, changing its quality to become a sculptor's medium. Sometimes, however, the pressure is relaxed and the poetry expands and swells into a rich elegiac music:

> O! wither'd is the garland of the war,
> The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
> Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
> And there is nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon.

The glow and passion of *Antony and Cleopatra* was followed by the curiously frigid rhetoric of *Coriolanus*, and then by the four romances of Shakespeare's final period: *Pericles*,[1] *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, written partly in his retirement at Stratford. These four plays form a well-defined group: they are all comedies in that they end happily; they are all concerned with the relations between father and daughter; they are all fantastically improbable—*The Tempest* indeed is little more than a fairy-tale; they all have a remarkable duality of tone,[2] particularly the first three; and they all suggest a return of Shakespeare to his first love, pure poetry.

These last two points are related. There is, generally in the first three acts of the plays, a savageness and brutality of speech that might come from the mouth of Thersites or Timon, and contrasts strangely with the gentleness and delicacy of the final scenes. Marina suffers the ordeal of the brothel at Mytilene; Posthumus talks more coarsely of Imogen than does Hamlet of his mother; and yellow Iachimo

[1] Only the last three Acts of *Pericles* are by Shakespeare.

[2] *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* have also a duality of time. Between Acts III and IV there is a break in the one of 14 years, in the other of 16.

speaks a language that Iago would understand, though poetry as intense as any that Shakespeare wrote:

> It cannot be i' the eye; for apes and monkeys,
> 'Twixt two such shes, would chatter this way, and
> Contemn with mows the other: nor i' the judgment;
> For idiots, in this case of favour, would,
> Be wisely definite: nor i' the appetite;
> Sluttery, to such neat excellence oppos'd,
> Should make desire vomit emptiness,
> Not so allur'd to feed.

Leontes is a morbid Othello with none of his virtues:

> There have been,
> Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now;
> And many a man there is, even at this present,
> Now, while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,
> That little thinks she has been sluic'd in's absence
> And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by
> Sir Smile, his neighbour: nay, there's comfort in't,
> Whiles other men have gates and those gates open'd,
> As mine, against their will. Should all despair
> That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind
> Would hang themselves. Physic for't there is none;
> It is a bawdy planet, that will strike
> Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,
> From east, west, north and south.

Antonio and Sebastian in *The Tempest*, despite their poetry, are more dangerous villains than the bungling and prosaic Don John and Borachio of *Much Ado*. And then there is Caliban with his Timon-like vituperation:

> As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
> With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
> Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye
> And blister you all o'er!

Against this viciousness of atmosphere, character, and language of the first half of the plays is set not only the pure poetry of the lyrics, *Hark, hark, the lark*, *When daffodils begin to peer*, *Lawn as white as driven snow*, *Come unto these yellow sands*, *Full fathom five*, *Where the bee sucks*, and of the masque in *The Tempest*, but also the poetry, much of it more lyrical than dramatic, of the last two acts. In *Pericles* there is the recognition scene which, for J. W. Mackail, is 'unsurpassed—one

sometimes is tempted to say, unequalled—for sheer perfection of beauty in the whole of Shakespeare's work. . . . Speech has become music.' And there is the wonderful lament of Pericles for Thaisa, surely some of the loveliest lines that Shakespeare ever wrote:

> A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear;
> No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements
> Forgot thee utterly; nor have I time
> To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
> Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;
> Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
> And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
> And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corse,
> Lying with simple shells.

In *Cymbeline* there is the slow-moving and simple poetry of the scene where Imogen takes refuge with her brothers, the dirge, *Fear no more the heat o' the sun*, and the lament of Arviragus:

> With fairest flowers,
> Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
> I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
> The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
> The azured harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
> The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
> Out-sweetened not thy breath: the ruddock would
> With charitable bill—O bill, sore shaming
> Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
> Without a monument!—bring thee all this:
> Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
> To winter-ground thy corse.

There is the sheep-shearing scene in *The Winter's Tale*:

> O Proserpina,
> For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's waggon! daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and
> The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
> The flower-de-luce being one.

And what shall we say of *The Tempest* which, in spite of the abortive villainies of Antonio, Sebastian and Caliban, is the purest poetry almost from beginning to end?

It will be noted that Shakespeare returns, perhaps with a feeling of nostalgia, to the imagery of his youth, to the classical, childish because so conventional, and charming figures of the period of the *Sonnets*: *azur'd hare-bell like thy veins; sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes; bright Phœbus in his strength.* But there is a difference: the effect is mellower and less brittle (I am not referring so much to the passages just quoted), partly because there is a far greater proportion of natural imagery, partly because of the greater technical mastery and variety of the verse, partly because of the sonorous vowel music, very different from the bravery of the consonants in:

> From you have I been absent in the spring,
> When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
> Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
> That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.

The pomp of spring has given way to a deep autumnal tone.

These four plays suggest that Shakespeare had grown tired of writing for the stage, to please an audience, and wrote instead to please himself. Apart from the heroines it is not the characters but the poetry that we remember, for with the exception of Prospero and possibly Iachimo, none of the serious characters leaves any deep impression. What do we know about Pericles, Cymbeline, and Leontes, or care about Posthumus, Florizel, and Ferdinand? They serve their purpose: they can be made to speak poetry, and they help to form the framework to which the rest of the poetry is applied.

Shakespeare was a poet before he was a dramatist; had he lived in any other age it is possible that he would not have been a dramatist at all; but he happened to be born almost in the same year as the poetic drama, and as he had somehow to make a living it was only prudent to harness his poetry to the stripling and popular drama instead of following his father's profession and writing poetry in his spare time. As it happened he was intoxicated by the drama and for a magical fifteen years character and poetry were perfectly fused, character making ever fresh demands and calling forth all the powers and resources of the poet. The pace must have been killing, and in his last years he turned with relief to romance and fairy-tale, where the demands of character were less exigent and the subject-matter for his poetry was less restricted.

Dr. Caroline Spurgeon has shown how, especially in the tragedies,

there is a dominating image or group of images, peculiar to the play and born of the emotions of the theme, and which recurs like 'a motif in a musical fugue or sonata'. Thus in *Romeo and Juliet* the dominating image is light, in *Othello* animals in action, in *Antony and Cleopatra* 'the world, the firmament, the ocean, and vastness generally'.[1] It is significant that in the plays that leave the least vivid impression, that strike us as comparatively cold, colourless, and formal, *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus*, there is in the one no leading or floating image, in the other merely the obtrusive symbol of the body, taken from North's *Plutarch* and somewhat pedantically worked out like a conceit on a gigantic scale. It is as though Shakespeare were not possessed by the theme, and wrote merely dispassionately. There can be no doubt that, in the greatest plays, this recurrent imagery, of which the reader is unconscious as was no doubt Shakespeare himself when he wrote, fuses them into a unity, an emotional unity, surpassing anything that can be achieved by the mechanical devices of unity of time and place. Even the neglected but beautiful fragment of *Pericles* is bound together by this imaginative intensity, and the reader must be dull of soul indeed who does not feel the thrill of Pericles' speech when he recognises his sea-born daughter Marina:

> O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir;
> Give me a gash, put me to present pain;
> Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me
> O'erbear the shores of my mortality,
> And drown me with their sweetness.

But within this great pattern of imagery which is co-extensive with the play there are the individual images which, as Mr. Day Lewis says, if they are not to be 'a series of stabbing, meaningless flashes, a pattern of imagery must be created, a relationship equivalent to that which underlies all reality, living or inanimate'. And Mr. Middleton Murry writes to the same effect:

> The greatest mastery of imagery does not lie in the use, however beautiful and revealing, of isolated images, but in the harmonious total impression produced by a succession of subtly related images.

And he analyses Enobarbus's famous description, which Shakespeare took from North's *Plutarch*, of Cleopatra in her barge on Cydnus, and shows how in the similes and metaphors 'the successive elements—the winds, the water, the air—are represented all as succumbing to the

[1] 'This vastness of scale is kept constantly before us by the use of the word "world", which occurs 42 times, nearly double or more than double as often as in most other plays.'

enchantment of love which breathes from the great Queen and her burning barge; and by this varied return on a single motive North's inconsequential panorama is given an organic unity'.[1]

A simpler example, perhaps, is Prospero's speech:

> You do look, my son, in a moved sort,
> As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.
> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

There is the accumulation of words signifying insubstantiality: *spirits*, *melted*, *air*, *thin*, *baseless*, *vision*, *cloud*, leading to the central concrete imagery of *towers*, *palaces*, *temples*, and *the great globe itself*, then the repetition of the theme of unreality and impermanence: *dissolve*, *insubstantial*, *faded*, *rack*, *stuff*, *dreams*, and finally the word *sleep*, which reconciles and knits up the ideas of transience and unreality with that of eternity. But note also how the rhythm and emotional significance of the final 'is rounded with a sleep' repeats that of the introductory 'Our revels now are ended', and more subtly still, how the climax of the central concrete imagery 'the great *globe* itself, Yea, all which it inherit', is made perfect in the climax of the whole passage, 'Is *rounded* with a sleep'.

[1] See p. 457.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S STYLE

THE following extracts are printed in chronological order, or at least in an order which must be approximately that in which Shakespeare wrote them, and are intended to illustrate his development as craftsman, poet, and dramatist. Technically, they illustrate the development of his verse from the 'drumming decasyllabon' of Marlowe to the wonderful plastic medium of the tragedies and romances: the steadily increasing use of feminine, light, and weak endings, of run-on lines and mid-line pauses and speech-endings. Compare the first extract, from 2 *Henry VI*, with that from *The Tempest*: the number of end-stopped lines, of pauses after the second foot, and quite simply their appearance on the printed page.

Poetically, they illustrate the abandonment of diffuse and leisurely rhetoric and lyric, the greater concentration and naturalism of the imagery and its integration with the action and character. There is a notable advance about 1597 when Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice* (though the extract quoted looks back rather than forward, and is perhaps the last of the non-dramatic lyrical passages) and 1 *Henry IV*. And compare Hamlet and Claudio, in *Measure for Measure*, on the fear of death, the latter's speech being surely one of the most miraculous ever written, with infinite meaning packed into a few simple words: *cold obstruction*, *delighted spirit*, *thrilling region*, *thick-ribbed ice*.

These achievements, technical and poetical, were at the same time dramatic, for the greater flexibility of the verse and compactness of the poetry led to an increased naturalism, subtler variation of the pace of the action, and more delicate delineation and development of character. This last point is illustrated by the soliloquies of Richard III, Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth. Richard's soliloquy is fine rhetoric, but he tells us little about himself beyond the fact that his deformity has driven his energy into the perverted channels of villainy; but the other four are self-revelations. Prince Henry has more in common with Richard than with the later tragic heroes: he too thinks outwardly, with neither conscious nor unconscious exploration of self, and reveals only that he is a princely and calculating hypocrite:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

The speech is important, and is fine poetry, but technically it is immature and dramatically clumsy when compared with the soliloquies that were to follow. But then, Prince Henry was no tragic hero: only a good shallow young fellow who would have chipped bread well.

The text and numbering of the lines are those of the Cambridge Edition. The dates of the plays can only be approximate.

2 *Henry VI.* 1590. (III. iii.)

King. How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to thy sovereign.
Beau. If thou be'st death, I'll give thee England's treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain.
King. Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is seen so terrible!
War. Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee.
Beau. Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Died he[1] not in his bed? where should he die?
Can I make men live, whether they will or no?
O, torture me no more! I will confess.
Alive again? then show me where he is:

[1] The King's uncle, the Protector Gloucester, whom Cardinal Beaufort has had murdered. (See p. 344.)

I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair; look, look! it stands upright,
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.
Give me some drink; and bid the apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.

King. O thou eternal mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

War. See, how the pangs of death do make him grin!

Sal. Disturb him not; let him pass peaceably.

King. Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!
Lord cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him!

War. So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

King Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close;
And let us all to meditation.

3 *Henry VI.* 1590. (I. iv. 125-140.)

It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen,
Unless the adage must be verified,
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;
But, God He knows, thy share thereof is small:
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;
The contrary doth make thee wonder'd at;
'Tis government that makes them seem divine;
The want thereof makes thee abominable:
Thou art as opposite to every good
As the Antipodes are unto us,
Or as the south to the septentrion.
O tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide![1]
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,
And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?

1 *Henry VI.* 1591. (I. i. 1-22.)

Bedford. Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
Comets, importing change of times and states,
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,

[1] The line parodied by Greene. (See p. 29.)

And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.[1]

Glou. England ne'er had a king until his time.
Virtue he had, deserving to command:
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams:
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;
His sparkling eyes, replete with wrathful fire,
More dazzled and drove back his enemies
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.
What should I say? his deeds exceed all speech:
He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.

Exeter. We mourn in black: why mourn we not in blood?
Henry is dead and never shall revive:
Upon a wooden coffin we attend,
And death's dishonourable victory
We with our stately presence glorify,
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.

Richard III. 1592. (I. i. 1-31.)

Glou. Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now instead of mounting barbed steeds
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature, by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,

[1] See p. 211

Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Titus Andronicus. 1592. (II. iv. 34-51.)

O, that I knew thy heart; and knew the beast,
That I might rail at him, to ease my mind!
Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.
Fair Philomel, why she but lost her tongue,
And in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind:
But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee;
A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,
And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,
That could have better sew'd than Philomel.
O, had the monster seen those lily hands
Tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute,
And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,
He would not then have touched them for his life!
Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony
Which that sweet tongue hath made,
He would have dropped his knife, and fell asleep
As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.

The Comedy of Errors. 1593. (III. ii. 29-52.)

Sweet mistress,—what your name is else, I know not,
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,—
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not
Than our earth's wonder; more than earth divine
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you
To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?
Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield.
But if that I am I, then well I know
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe:
Far more, far more to you do I decline.

O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:
Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote:
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie;
And, in that glorious supposition, think
He gains by death that hath such means to die.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona. 1593. (I. iii. 78-87.)

Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,
And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.
I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,
Lest he should take exceptions to my love;
And with the vantage of mine own excuse
Hath he excepted most against my love.
O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day,[1]
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away!

Venus and Adonis. 1592-3. (289-306.)

Look, when a painter would surpass the life
In limning out a well proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife
As if the dead the living should exceed;
So did this horse excel a common one
In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.

Round-hoofed, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometimes he scuds far off, and there he stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;
To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
And whether he run or fly they know not whether;
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feathered wings.

[1] See p. 354.

The Rape of Lucrece. 1593-4. (939-952.)

Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right,
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours
And smear with dust their glittering golden towers;

To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oak's sap and cherish springs,
To spoil antiquities of hammer'd steel
And turn the giddy round of Fortune's wheel.

Sonnets. 1593-6. (Numbers 33 and 55.)

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But, out, alack! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Sons of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Love's Labour's Lost. 1594. (IV. iii. 330-350.)

A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,
When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd:
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockled snails;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:
For valour, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair;
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
Never durst poet touch a pen to write
Until his ink were tempered with Love's sighs;
O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,
And plant in tyrants mild humility.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain and nourish all the world:
Else none at all in aught proves excellent.

Romeo and Juliet. 1595. (V. iii. 91-120.)

O my love! my wife!
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there. . . .
Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee,
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again: here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!

Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark.
Here's to my love! O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

Richard II. 1595. (III. ii. 144-170.)

No matter where; of comfort no man speak:
Let's talk of graves, of worms and epitaphs;
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
Let's choose executors and talk of wills:
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke's,
And nothing can we call our own but death,
And that small model of the barren earth
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
For God's sake let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:
How some have been deposed; some slain in war;
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;
Some poison'd by their wives; some sleeping kill'd;
All murder'd: for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits,
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be fear'd and kill with looks,
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
As if this flesh which walls about our life
Were brass impregnable, and humour'd thus
Comes at the last and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!

The Taming of the Shrew. 1596. (II. i. 231-254.)

Pet. Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.
Kath. Yet you are wither'd.
Pet. 'Tis with cares.
Kath. I care not.
Pet. Nay, hear you Kate: in sooth you scape not so.
Kath. I chafe you, if I tarry: let me go.
Pet. No, not a whit: I find you passing gentle.
'Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;

For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers:
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk,
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,
With gentle conference, soft and affable.
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twig
Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue
As hazel-nuts and sweeter than the kernels.
O, let me see thee walk: thou dost not halt.

Kath. Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

Pet. Did ever Dian so become a grove
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?
O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;
And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful.

A Midsummer Night's Dream. 1596. (IV. i. 100-124.)

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

King John. 1597. (V. vii. 28-58.)

John. Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room;
It would not out at windows nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust:
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment, and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

P. Hen. How fares your Majesty?

John. Poison'd,—ill fare—dead, forsook, cast off:
And none of you will bid the winter come
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

P. Hen. O that there were some virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you!

John. The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell; and there the poison
Is as a fiend confined to tyrannize
On unreprieveable condemned blood.

Bast. Oh, I am scalded with my violent motion,
And spleen of speed to see your majesty.

John. O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye:
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail
Are turned to one thread, one little hair:
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod
And module of confounded royalty.

The Merchant of Venice. 1597. (V. i. 1-24.)

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.
Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.
Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.
Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.[1]

Henry IV, Part 1. 1597. (I. iii. 228-256.)

Hot. All studies here I solemnly defy,
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke:
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,
But that I think his father loves him not
And would be glad he met with some mischance,
I would have him poison'd with a pot of ale.
Wor. Farewell, kinsman: I'll talk to you
When you are better temper'd to attend.
Nor. Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!
Hot. Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourged with rods,
Nettled, and stung with pismires, when I hear
Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.
In Richard's time,—what do you call the place?—
A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire;
'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,
His uncle York; where I first bow'd my knee
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke,—
'Sblood!—
When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh.
Nor. At Berkley-castle.

[1] See p. 383.

Hot. You say true:
Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
Look, 'when his infant fortune came to age',
And 'gentle Harry Percy', and 'kind cousin';
O, the devil take such cozeners! God forgive me!
Good uncle, tell your tale; I have done.

Henry IV, Part 2. 1598. (II. iii. 9-36.)

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars!
The time was, father, that you broke your word,
When you were more endear'd to it than now;
When your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,
Threw many a northward look to see his father
Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.
Who then persuaded you to stay at home?
There were two honours lost, yours and your son's.
For yours, the God of heaven brighten it!
For his, it stuck upon him as the sun
In the grey vault of heaven, and by his light
Did all the chivalry of England move
To do brave acts: he was indeed the glass
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves;
He had no legs that practised not his gait;
And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
Became the accents of the valiant;
For those that could speak low and tardily
Would turn their own perfection to abuse,
To seem like him: so that in speech, in gait,
In diet, in affections of delight,
In military rules, humours of blood,
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,
That fashioned others. And him, O wondrous him!
O miracle of men! him did you leave,
Second to none, unseconded by you,
To look upon the hideous god of war
In disadvantage.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. 1598. (IV. iv. 27-37.)

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain

In a most hideous and dreadful manner:
You have heard of such a spirit; and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Received, and did deliver to our age,
The tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Henry V. 1599. (I. ii. 184-204.)

Therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavour in continual motion;
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
Obedience: for so work the honey-bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king and officers of sorts;
Where some, like magistrates correct at home,
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor;
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold,
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,
The poor mechanic porters crowding in
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,
The sad-eyed justice with his surly hum,
Delivering o'er to executors pale
The lazy yawning drone.

Much Ado About Nothing. 1599. (V. i. 15-38.)

If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem!' when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man: for, brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air, and agony with words:
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,

But no man's virtue nor sufficiency,
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement . . .
I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

As You Like It. 1600. (II. vii. 70-87.)

Why, who cries out on pride,
That can therein tax any private party?
Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,
Till that the weary very means do ebb?
What woman in the city do I name,
When that I say the city-woman bears
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?
Who can come in and say that I mean her,
When such a one as she such is her neighbour?
Or what is he of basest function,
That says his bravery is not on my cost,
Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits
His folly to the mettle of my speech?
There then; how then? what then? Let me see wherein
My tongue hath wrong'd him: if it do him right,
Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,
Why then my taxing like a wild-goose flies,
Unclaim'd of any man.

Twelfth Night. 1600. (II. iv. 92-123.)

Duke. There is no woman's sides
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
So big, to hold so much; they lack retention.
Alas, their love may be call'd appetite,—
No motion of the liver, but the palate,—
That suffer surfeit, cloyment and revolt;
But mine is all as hungry as the sea,
And can digest as much: make no compare
Between that love a woman can bear me
And that I owe Olivia.
Vio. Ay, but I know,—
Duke. What dost thou know?

Vio. Too well what love women to men may owe:
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.
My father had a daughter loved a man,
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.
Duke. And what's her history?
Vio. A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?
We men may say more, swear more: but indeed
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.
Duke. But died thy sister of her love, my boy?
Vio. I am all the daughters of my father's house,
And all the brothers too: and yet I know not.
Sir, shall I to this lady?
Duke. Ay, that's the theme.
To her in haste; give her this jewel; say,
My love can give no place, bide no denay.

Julius Cæsar. 1601. (II. i. 10-34.)

It must be by his death: and, for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question:
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him?—that;—
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend: so Cæsar may;
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which hatch'd would as his kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

Hamlet. 1601. (III. i. 56-88.)

To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die: to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Troilus and Cressida. 1602. (III. iii. 145-179.)

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,
A great-sized monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon

As done: perseverance, dear my lord,
Keeps honour bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;
For emulation hath a thousand sons
That one by one pursue: if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,
Like to an enter'd tide they all rush by
And leave you hindmost:
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For time is like a fashionable host
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er dusted.

All's Well that Ends Well. 1603. (I. ii. 45-67.)

King. Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times;
Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now
But goers backward.

Bertram. His good remembrance, sir,
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb;
So in approof lives not his epitaph
As in your royal speech.

King. Would I were with him! He would always say—
Methinks I hear him now; his plausive words
He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,
To grow there and to bear,—'Let me not live',—
This his good melancholy oft began,

On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,
When it was out,—'Let me not live', quoth he,
'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain; whose judgements are
Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies
Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd:
I after him do after him wish too,
Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,
I quickly were dissolved from my hive,
To give some labourers room.

Measure for Measure. 1603. (III. i. 114-152.)

Claud. If it were damnable, he being so wise,
Why would he for the momentary trick
Be perdurably fined?—O Isabel!
Isab. What says my brother?
Claud. Death is a fearful thing.
Isab. And shamed life a hateful.
Claud. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world: or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling:—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.
Isab. Alas, alas!
Claud. Sweet sister, let me live:
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far
That it becomes a virtue.
Isab. O you beast!
O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Is 't not a kind of incest, to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?
Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness

Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance!
Die, perish! Might but my bending down
Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:
I'll pray a-thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.
Claud. Nay, hear me, Isabel.
Isab. O, fie, fie, fie!
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:
'Tis best that thou diest quickly.

Othello. 1604. (V. ii. 1-22.)

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more:
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after: one more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love.

Timon of Athens. 1605. (V. i. 195-221.)

Commend me to them;
And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,
Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,
Their pangs of love, with other incident throes
That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain
In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them:
I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath . . .
I have a tree, which grows here in my close,
That mine own use invites me to cut down,

And shortly must I fell it: tell my friends,
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree
From high to low throughout, that whoso please
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
Come hither ere my tree hath felt the axe,
And hang himself: I pray you, do my greeting . . .
Come not to me again: but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover: thither come,
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.
Lips, let sour words go by and language end:
What is amiss, plague and infection mend!
Graves only be men's works, and death their gain!
Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign.[1]

King Lear. 1606. (II. iv. 263-285.)

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both:
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

Macbeth. 1606. (I. vii. 1-28.)

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination

[1] See p. 339.

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We 'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgement here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Antony and Cleopatra. 1607. (V. ii. 278-326.)

Cleo. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Cæsar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath. Husband, I come
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.
(*Kisses them. Iras falls and dies*
Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,

Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.
Char. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may say
The gods themselves do weep!
Cleo. This proves me base:
If she first meet the curled Antony,
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come thou mortal wretch,
(*To an asp, which she applies to her breast.*
With thy sharp teeth the knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Cæsar ass
Unpolicied!
Char. O eastern star!
Cleo. Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?
Char. O, break! O, break!
Cleo. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—
O Antony!—Nay, I will take thee too:
(*Applying another asp to her arm.*
What should I stay— (*Dies.*
Char. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
Now boast thee death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phœbus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play.

Enter Guard.

Gd. 1. Where is the queen?
Char. Speak softly, wake her not.
Gd. 1. Cæsar hath sent—
Char. Too slow a messenger.
(*Applies an asp.*
O, come apace, dispatch: I partly feel thee.
Gd. 1. Approach, ho! All's not well: Cæsar's beguiled.
Gd. 2. There's Dolabella sent from Cæsar; call him.
Gd. 1. What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?
Char. It is well done, and fitting for a princess
Descended of so many royal kings.
Ah, soldier![1] (*Dies.*

[1] See p. 339.

Coriolanus. 1607. (IV. v. 53-84.)

Auf. Whence comest thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?
Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?
Cor. (*Unmuffling*) If, Tullus,
Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not
Think me for the man I am, necessity
Commands me name myself.
Auf. What is thy name?
Cor. A name unmusical to the Volscian's ears,
And harsh in sound to thine.
Auf. Say, what's thy name?
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face
Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,
Thou show'st a noble vessel; what's thy name?
Cor. Prepare thy brow to frown:—know'st thou me yet?
Auf. I know thee not:—thy name?
Cor. My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly, and to all the Volsces,
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname Coriolanus: the painful service,
The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood
Shed for my thankless country, are requited
But with that surname; a good memory,
And witness of the malice and displeasure
Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name remains:
The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be
Hoop'd out of Rome. Now, this extremity
Hath brought me to thy hearth: not out of hope—
Mistake me not—to save my life, for if
I had fear'd death, of all men i' the world
I would have 'voided thee; but in mere spite,
To be full quit of those my banishers,
Stand I before thee here. . . .[1]

Pericles. 1608. (III. i. 1-64.)

Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,
Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou, that hast
Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,
Having call'd them from the deep! O, still
Thy deafening dreadful thunders; gently quench
Thy nimble sulphurous flashes! O, how, Lychorida,
How does my queen? Thou stormest venomously;

[1] See p. 339.

Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle
Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
Unheard. Lychorida!—Lucina, O
Divinest patroness and midwife gentle
To those that cry by night, convey thy deity
Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs
Of my queen's travails . . .
A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear;
No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly; nor have I time
To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,
Lying with simple shells.

Cymbeline. 1609. (II. ii. 11-33.)

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd sense
Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus
Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd
The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,
How bravely thou becomest thy bed! fresh lily!
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, white and azure, laced
With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design,
To note the chamber: I will write all down:
Such and such pictures; there the window; such
The adornment of her bed; the arras, figures,
Why, such and such; and the contents o' the story.
Ah, but some natural notes about her body
Above ten thousand meaner moveables
Would testify, to enrich mine inventory.
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!
And be her sense but as a monument,
Thus in a chapel lying.

The Winter's Tale. 1610. (IV. iv. 468-496.)

Flor. It cannot fail but by
The violation of my faith; and then
Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together

And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks:
From my succession wipe me, father, I
Am heir to my affection.

Cam. Be advised.

Flor. I am, and by my fancy: if my reason
Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;
If not, my senses, better pleased with madness,
Do bid it welcome.

Cam. This is desperate, sir.

Flor. So call it: but it does fulfil my vow;
I needs must think it honesty. Camillo,
Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may
Be thereat glean'd; for all the sun sees, or
The close earth wombs, or the profound seas hide
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath
To this my fair beloved: therefore, I pray you,
As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,
When he shall miss me,—as, in faith, I mean not
To see him any more,—cast your good counsels
Upon his passion: let myself and fortune
Tug for the time to come. This you may know
And so deliver, I am put to sea
With her whom here I cannot hold on shore;
And most opportune to our need I have
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared
For this design. What course I mean to hold
Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor
Concern me the reporting.

The Tempest. 1611. (II. i. 234-259.)

Ant. Will you grant with me
That Ferdinand is drown'd?

Seb. He's gone.

Ant. Then, tell me,
Who's the next heir to Naples?

Seb. Claribel.

Ant. She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples
Can have no note, unless the sun were post,—
The man i' the moon's too slow,—till new-born chins
Be rough and razorable; she that from whom
We all were sea-swallowed, though some cast again,
And by that destiny, to perform an act
Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come,
Is yours and my discharge.

Seb. What stuff is this! How say you?
'Tis true, my brother's daughter's queen of Tunis;
So is she heir of Naples; 'twixt which regions
There is some space.
Ant. A space whose every cubit
Seems to cry out, 'How shall that Claribel
Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,
And let Sebastian wake.' Say, this were death
That now hath seized them; why, they were no worse
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples
As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate
As amply and unnecessarily
As this Gonzalo; I myself could make
A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore
The mind that I do! what a sleep were this
For your advancement! Do you understand me?

Henry VIII. 1612. (I. i. 13-38.)

Then you lost
The view of earthly glory: men might say,
Till this time pomp was single, but now married
To one above itself. Each following day
Became the next day's master, till the last
Made former wonders its. To-day the French,
All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,
Shone down the English; and to-morrow they
Made Britain India: every man that stood
Show'd like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were
As cherubins, all gilt: the madams too,
Not used to toil, did almost sweat to bear
The pride upon them, that their very labour
Was to them as a painting: now this masque
Was cried incomparable; and the ensuing night
Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings,
Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,
As presence did present them; him in eye
Still him in praise; and being present both,
'Twas said they saw but one, and no discerner
Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns—
For so they phrase 'em—by their heralds challenged
The noble spirits to arms, they did perform
Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous story,
Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
That Bevis was believed.

The Two Noble Kinsmen. 1613? (V. i. 69-97.)

Our stars must glister with new fire, or be
To-day extinct; our argument is love,
Which if the goddess of it grant, she gives
Victory too: then blend your spirits with mine,
You, whose free nobleness do make my cause
Your personal hazard: to the goddess Venus
Commend we our proceeding, and implore
Her power unto our party.
Hail, sovereign queen of secrets, who hast power
To call the fiercest tyrant from his rage,
To weep unto a girl; that hast the might
Even with an eye-glance to choke Mars's drum,
And turn th'alarm to whispers; that canst make
A cripple flourish with his crutch, and cure him
Before Apollo; that mayst force the king
To be his subject's vassal, and induce
Stale gravity to dance; the polled bachelor—
Whose youth, like wanton boys through bonfires,
Have skipt thy flame—at seventy thou canst catch,
And make him, to the scorn of his hoarse throat,
Abuse young lays of love: what godlike power
Hast thou not power upon? to Phœbus thou
Add'st flames, hotter than his; the heavenly fires
Did scorch his mortal son, thine him; the huntress
All moist and cold, some say, began to throw
Her bow away, and sigh: take to thy grace
Me, thy vow'd soldier, who do bear thy yoke
As 'twere a wreath of roses, yet is heavier
Than lead itself, stings more than nettles.

Four examples of Shakespeare's prose are added. They show something the same progress as the verse: from the stiff and stylised to a graceful and apparent naturalism; from the artifice of Lyly, the elaborate antitheses and quibbles of *Love's Labour's Lost*, through the brilliantly polished speech of Benedick and Beatrice, to the greater ease and freedom of the dialogue in *Hamlet*, and the noble simplicity of the tragic prose in *Macbeth*. This is a rapid generalisation: the distance travelled in the evolution of prose as a dramatic medium is inevitably less spectacular, and development is less consistent: there is comparatively simple early prose and comparatively artificial later prose, but generally speaking the early work is more stiff, artificial, and angular, the later more flexible, various and dynamic: in a word, more dramatic.

Love's Labour's Lost. 1594. (IV. iii.)

Biron. The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch,—pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool; well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: it kills sheep; it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love: if I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O, but her eye,—by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love: and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy. Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already: the clown bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady! By the world, I would not care a pin, if the other three were in. Here comes one with a paper: God give him grace to groan!

Much Ado About Nothing. 1599. (II. iii.)

Benedick. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

Hamlet. 1601. (III. ii.)

Hamlet. O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guildenstern. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. It is as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

Macbeth. 1606. (V. i.)

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to: you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity o the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. Pray God it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands; put on your nightgown; look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

IN his *Poetics* Aristotle maintains that in tragedy character is subsidiary to action:

> Most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character.

The last sentence is true enough, though of course there need not be violent physical action; and it is equally true of comedy and of all other forms of drama. But Greek tragedy, the only tragedy with which Aristotle was acquainted, was religious in origin, as was indeed modern European drama, but unlike the latter it never lost its religious significance. Its theme was the well-known story of some great national hero whose actions were powerful to influence for good or ill the fortunes of his countrymen; its method was an interpretation of the inevitable event. The action, therefore, was the important thing, the man who performed or suffered it the representative of the nation; he was Man rather than a particular man.

Nor was the drama of the Middle Ages concerned with the individual, but with Everyman and his relation to God. With the Renaissance, however, came the emancipation of man through his discovery of his physical, mental, and spiritual powers; all things seemed possible to his proud and soaring imagination, and instead of a generalisation man became an individual, each one with unique and wonderful potentialities. In sculpture, painting, and stained glass we can watch this change taking place from the conventionalised figures of the Middle Ages to the flesh and blood of the new world; and as the visual arts began to represent the outward appearance of real men and women, so the drama began to represent their inner qualities, that is, their characters. It was no longer concerned merely with a few stock figures and foreknown situations, with Œdipus or Agamemnon, but with any of the multitudinous characters of the real world, with

Shylock and Hamlet, with Falstaff as well as with Henry IV. In the hands of Shakespeare and some of his contemporaries drama became more than an imitation of an action, it became the 'projection of character in action', the revelation and embodiment, as it were, in visible action of his abstract qualities. One of the things which, according to Coleridge, particularly distinguishes Shakespeare's plays is the 'independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more.' As Dryden said with reference to another matter, 'It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides: and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind', and might have admitted that in Shakespeare and the modern drama action is subsidiary to and dependent upon character.

The essence of Greek drama, tragedy and comedy alike, was the chorus with its music, song, and dance, and it was the chorus that gave the drama much of its æsthetic significance. Had modern drama, necessarily deprived of the chorus (for it was a spontaneous and organic religious expression), remained dependent merely upon action it would have been but a poor and unworthy thing, for in itself action is the least affecting element in a play. But from the earliest times dialogue was written in verse, and by the Elizabethans verse was lifted to the plane of poetry, while music, song, and even dance were used to achieve the dramatic affect. The greatest contribution of modern times to the drama, however, is character, and it is character expressed in poetry that makes Shakespeare's plays as great as, perhaps even greater than, those of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

It is easy enough, within limits, to understand why we take such delight in the imitation of an action. We are by nature imitative, and the recognition of the relation between the action on the stage and that of real life fills us with the same sort of pleasure that we experience from the recognition of any other object in the image, whether in a good joke, a model, a painting, or more subtly, in metaphor. But it is more than this, and here Roger Fry in his *Essay in Æsthetics* is illuminating. He points out that man leads, or is capable of leading, a double life: one the actual, and the other the imaginative; in the one he feels more strongly but more confusedly, in the other he both sees more clearly and feels more purely. For instance, if we are involved in an adventure with a wild bull the overpowering emotion is one of fear inspired by our instinct of self-preservation, and we see little of the incident because we are too preoccupied with the reaction of flight which is the important part of the whole process.

> The whole of animal life, and a great part of human life, is made up of these instinctive reactions to sensible objects, and their accompanying emotions. But man has the peculiar faculty of calling up again in his mind the echo of past experiences of this kind, of going over it again, 'in imagination' as we say . . . In the imaginative life no such action is necessary, and, therefore, the whole consciousness may be focused upon the perceptive and the emotional aspects of the experience. In this way we get, in the imaginative life, a different set of values, and a different kind of perception.

Similarly, if we see even an everyday event projected on the screen of a cinema, 'this resembles actual life in almost every respect, except that what the psychologists call the conative part of our reaction to sensations is cut off'. We see more clearly because we are spectators and not actors in the event; we are abstracted from real life and see it with comparative dispassion and clarity, for our vision is not confused by the necessity of action. If the scene presented be one that inspires pity and terror, though these emotions will be weaker than those in real life, they will be felt more purely because, once again, they will not be confused and even overpowered by other (and dramatically irrelevant) emotions inspired by panic and the impact of events on our real life.

Roger Fry was writing of the graphic arts, but his remarks apply with equal validity to the drama; and if this clarity of perception and feeling characteristic of the imaginative life applies to the representation of action it would seem to apply also to the representation of character, and account, at least in part, for the delight we take in recognising on the stage the object in the image, a real man in the figure of a poor player, a walking shadow. We apprehend him with greater clarity than the real people who surround us, for what he is and what he does cannot affect our actual life, and we feel for him with simpler and purer emotions, for they are less confused and troubled by personal considerations. Not only this, but we can if we wish identify ourselves with the characters on the stage and experience vicariously feelings of pity and terror, joy and exaltation, with the pleasurable knowledge that we can withdraw from the imaginative into the actual world if we so desire. For character is the hook by which we may attach ourselves to the action. We can at will enjoy the pleasures of the imaginative and the actual life, be abstracted from and identify ourselves with character and action, be both spectators of and participators in the event. In Greek tragedy the audience were primarily spectators; in Shakespearean tragedy, owing to the development of character, they are spectators and actors alike.

It is a fair generalisation to make that before the time of Shakespeare there were no characters in English literature, or for that matter in modern European literature: there were only situations and puppets. Occasionally, it is true, a character in the mystery or morality plays comes to life, like the sheep-stealer Mak in the Second Shepherds' Play, or Everyman when he is deserted by Beauty. And there is the astonishing genius Chaucer who, had he lived two centuries later, might have rivalled Shakespeare as a dramatist, but as it is, his real characters—the characters of the *Prologue* and others drawn from contemporary life—are for the most part only brilliant sketches: we do not see enough of them, nor do we see them in action and thrown into relief by the background of events fully to realise them in the round. Palamon and Arcite are little more than the stock figures of medieval romance, the Knight and Squire are flat, heraldic patterns, but the Wife of Bath is magnificently alive and of the same strain as Mistress Quickly, and she and Harry Bailey the inn-keeper are perhaps the most real characters in English literature before the time of Shakespeare. Marlowe's figures are big rather than real: they grow to monstrous proportions and, except for Edward II, we cannot believe in them.

Shakespeare starts where Marlowe and the rest of the University Wits left off, that is with rhetoric and action, with non-dramatic poetry and situation, his progress being by way of prose and comic character to the dramatic poetry and tragic character of his maturity. 'Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood', writes Johnson. 'Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.' Yet the earliest plays are peopled by puppets, and speech is declamation rather than dramatic dialogue. The opening speeches of *Henry VI Part* 1 are fine, but with the rhetoric of Marlowe:

> Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
> And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
> That have consented unto Henry's death!

Richard III is a remarkable advance, yet Richard's character is revealed in the crudest way open to the dramatist: in the soliloquy with which the play opens he tells the audience what manner of man he is:

> And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
> To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
> I am determined to prove a villain,
> And hate the idle pleasures of these days.
> Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous, . . .

and then acts consistently according to this self-revelation, though with an enlivening smack of the bastard Edmund's sardonic humour. 'Richard III', says Mr. Bernard Shaw, 'is delightful as the whimsical comedian who stops a funeral to make love to the corpse's son's widow; but when, in the next act, he is replaced by a stage villain who smothers babies and offs with people's heads, we are revolted at the imposture and repudiate the changeling.' And Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* is a similar stage villain:

> O, how this villainy
> Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!
> Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace,
> Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

The truth is that, with a few exceptions, the main characters in the plays scarcely come to life before the time of *The Merchant of Venice*. Rhetorical and euphuistic verse is not a good medium for the expression and development of character, and it is no wonder that the characters we remember in the early plays are the subordinate ones, not those borrowed along with the plot, but Shakespeare's own creations, comic or serio-comic characters thrown in to fill a gap but unworthy to speak verse, or only on special occasions: we remember Speed and Launce but we forget their masters Valentine and Proteus. And similarly in *Love's Labour's Lost*, instead of Biron and Rosaline with their rattling word-play it is Holofernes, and Armado, and Costard that we remember, even Sir Nathaniel: 'a foolish mild man; an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler: but, for Alisander,—alas, you see how 't is,—a little o'erparted.'

But Shakespearean character, fully rigged, first sails on to the stage with the shameless and outrageous Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*:

> Now, by my maidenhead,—at twelve year old,—
> I bade her come.—What, lamb! what, lady-bird!—
> God forbid!—where's this girl?—what, Juliet!

And in the same play Mercutio, to begin with scarcely distinguishable from any other of Shakespeare's high-spirited young men, save per-

haps by his immoderate bawdiness, only begins to live when he begins to die, significantly enough, in prose:

> No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church-door; but 'tis enough, 't will serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I warrant, for this world.—A plague o' both your houses.

Christopher Sly is more real than Petruchio and Kate, Faulconbridge than John, Constance, and Arthur, Bottom than Theseus and Hippolyta, Demetrius and the rest of the lovers.

It is as though Shakespeare was, to begin with, almost frightened of his exalted personages and felt so much respect for them that he left them on their pedestals scarcely brought to life. Perhaps this explains why that remarkable and in many ways so unpleasant work *The Merchant of Venice* is his first successful play written mostly in verse; successful in that the main characters, quite simple people, are really alive. Or perhaps it was merely that Shylock, conceived originally as a subordinate character and a figure of fun, but necessary for the development of the plot, seized on his imagination and became a real and tragic figure. Shakespeare could not kill him to prevent his overwhelming Antonio, as he had already killed Mercutio for the sake of Romeo and was soon to kill Falstaff for the sake of Henry V, and he had no alternative but to abandon the play or allow him to become the main character.

The Merchant of Venice, with its beautiful though heartless last act, belongs poetically to the early group of Shakespeare's plays; from the point of view of characterisation it belongs to the middle period; it stands between the two groups and makes the transition from the one to the other. The middle period of the comedies and historical comedies, from *Henry IV* to *Twelfth Night*, is that of prose: when Shakespeare uses prose as much as, or even more than, he uses verse. Verse on the whole had been lyrical or rhetorical, non-dramatic and inexpressive of character; while prose had proved the medium that had given life to the characters. Now he was to apply it to his main and serious characters much as he had applied it to the subordinate and comic ones, and the result is astonishing; not only do we have Falstaff, Bardolph, Pistol, Mistress Quickly, Shallow, Dogberry, Touchstone, Feste, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, but we have Prince Henry, Hotspur, Glendower, Fluellen, Mistress Ford, Mistress Page, Benedick, Beatrice, Rosalind, Celia, Jaques,[1] Malvolio, Maria,

[1] 'Nay, God be with you, an you speak in blank verse', says Jaques. And mincing poetry sets Hotspur's teeth on edge.

Olivia, Viola, and a host of others. No longer are the main characters overshadowed by the subordinate, but all are combined and fused into a dramatic unity that had not been achieved before.

Shakespeare, of course, did not abandon verse; he used it almost as much as prose, but it is verse with a difference, verse that has learned much from its contact with prose. It is less elaborate, almost simple: not only is there a remarkable decline in the percentage of rhyme (from an average of 15% in the plays before *Henry IV* to 6% in those between *Henry IV* and *Twelfth Night*, and only 4·5% if *Twelfth Night* be excluded), but there is little of the quibbling which Johnson found so distressing; Shakespeare never wrote like this again:

> I am too sore enpierced with his shaft
> To soar with his light feathers; and so bound,
> I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe.

There is less rhetoric: the characters really listen to one another instead of declaiming to the empty air—except Henry V, in whom a love of rhetoric and of his own voice is an essential quality. And there are fewer lyrical set-pieces and digressions· Benedick does not lose himself in words like Mercutio:

> True, I talk of dreams,
> Which are the children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
> Which is as thin of substance as the air;
> And more inconstant than the wind, who wooes
> Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
> And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
> Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

Thus Mercutio, and it might just as well be Romeo or Benvolio or any other character in the play; but it is impossible to quote a comparable passage of Benedick, for he only speaks twenty-five lines of verse.

For technical reasons too the verse becomes less stiff and brittle, more flexible and fluid. A secondary rhythm is mounted on the primary one of the metre; one line flows into another; short lines occur in mid-speech, giving emphasis, variety, and a broken cadence to the verse; and there is a notable increase in the number of speeches that end in the middle, instead of at the end, of a line. Compare a page of verse in *Romeo and Juliet* with one in *Twelfth Night* (and to anticipate, with one in *The Winter's Tale*) and you can *see* the difference without reading. In brief, this chastened, deceptively

simple-looking, almost colloquial verse has become dramatic, expressive of action and creative of character. Listen to Hotspur and Glendower:

Hot. Lord Mortimer, and Cousin Glendower,
Will you sit down?—
And, uncle Worcester:—a plague upon it!
I have forgot the map.
Glen. No, here it is. . . .
Hot. I'll have it so; a little charge will do it.
Glen. I will not have it alter'd.
Hot. Will not you?
Glen. No, nor you shall not
Hot. Who shall say me nay?
Glen. Why, that will I.
Hot. Let me not understand you then:
Speak it in Welsh.
Glen. I can speak English, lord, as well as you. . . .

The next group of plays, *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*,[1] *All's Well*, and *Measure for Measure*, makes the transition from the middle period to the mature style of the tragedies. Technically they resemble the earlier group (though there is a significant increase in the number of speeches that end in the middle of a line) and prose is still an important part of the expression: in the two comedies there is as much prose as verse, in the two tragedies there is approximately half as much. This use of prose links them to the preceding histories and comedies, but in tone they are very different and even the two comedies have more in common with the great series of tragedies that was to succeed them. There is a bitterness, at times a cynicism, which is far removed from the light-heartedness of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, and a prelude to the tragic agony of Othello, Lear, and Macbeth. For Hamlet the world

is an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely.

And when Troilus sees Cressida so willingly seduced by Diomedes the anguished words are wrung from him,

O wither'd truth! . . .
O beauty! where is thy faith?

[1] The trick of style in *Hamlet*, and to a less degree in *Troilus and Cressida*, has already been indicated. (See p. 128.)

while Thersites comments as Chorus:

> How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!

In *All's Well* Helena has to resort to an ignominious trick to secure a husband who has already seduced another woman; and Isabella in *Measure for Measure* is torn on the rack of her virtue.

In the tragedies and romances the wheel has come full circle: verse which was the main medium of the early plays—almost the only medium of the early histories[1]—has come again into its own. When prose is used in the tragedies it is to secure a definite dramatic purpose —Lear's madness, Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking, or the Porter's soliloquy that links the horror of the night to the discovery of day— and never simply to advance the action or to develop character, though of course it does both incidentally. Less than a tenth of *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* is written in prose. The verse that entered the middle period as lyrical poetry and rhetoric was subdued and simplified by its contact with prose, and emerged transfigured and charged with an energy that made it the most powerful instrument of dramatic construction ever wielded by the hand of man. No longer does it hang loosely in the plays, decorating but at the same time obscuring both action and character in its folds; verse *is* the action, verse *is* the character, and every image, every phrase, almost every word is a revelation of some quality of mind or spirit.

> Like to the Pontic sea,
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontic and the Hellespont:
> Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
> Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up.

Compare the significance of Othello's simile (echoed later in 'a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper') with Mercutio's charming but dramatically insignificant comparison of dreams to the air and wind, already quoted. Or better, compare the effect in Romeo's beautiful though protracted final speech of:

[1] There are only 500 lines of prose in the six early histories, and these are all in two of the plays, *Henry VI Pt.* 2 and *Richard III.*

> Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!
> Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
> The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!

with Othello's

> Here is my journey's end, here is my butt
> And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.

The one is part of a dramatic lyric, almost superficial, the other is a revelation of the centre itself.

This development of Shakespeare's verse by way of prose from comparatively non-dramatic to dramatic poetry has been insisted on because it runs parallel to his development of characterisation, of which indeed it is the cause, or at least in part the cause. Without the dramatic verse of his maturity there might have been a Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and Antony, but they would have been very different creations from the ones that we know; imagine Antony and Cleopatra speaking the language of Romeo and Juliet, or a prose-speaking Othello and Macbeth.

Of these tragedies Professor Bradley writes:

> What we do feel strongly, as a tragedy advances to its close, is that the calamities and catastrophe follow inevitably from the deeds of men, and that the main source of these deeds is character. The dictum that, with Shakespeare, 'character is destiny' is no doubt an exaggeration, and one that may mislead (for many of his tragic personages, if they had not met with peculiar circumstances, would have escaped a tragic end, and might even have lived fairly untroubled lives); but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth.

'Not so', replies Sir Walter Raleigh:

> Shakespeare's tragedies deal with greater things than man; with powers and passions, elemental forces, and dark abysses of suffering; with the central fire, which breaks through the thin crust of civilisation, and makes a splendour in the sky above the blackness of ruined homes. . . . It is not true to say that in these tragedies character is destiny . . . Hamlet is sensitive, thoughtful, generous, impulsive,—'a pure, noble, and most moral nature'—yet he does not escape the extreme penalty, and at the bar of a false criticism he too is made guilty of the catastrophe. But Shakespeare, who watched his heroes, awestruck, as he saw them being drawn into the gulf, passed no such judgment on them. In his view of it, what they suffer is out of all proportion to what they do and are. They are presented with a choice, and the essence of the tragedy is that choice is impossible.

These two views are not, perhaps, as irreconcilable as they appear at first sight. In *Macbeth* there are elemental and supernatural forces which bring all their powers of evil to bear on the tragic hero and drive him to murder and his own destruction. In *Lear* the elements themselves are not actively hostile, they are horrible because they are insentient and break the old king dispassionately. They are contrasted with the elemental evil which is active in the deliberate cruelty of Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund, though these are not agents who drive Lear to commit his tragic blunder, but instruments of torture when he has delivered himself into their hands. Like Macbeth,[1] Othello is assailed from without, but as in *Lear* the enemy is in human form, if the epithet may be applied to the inhuman Iago. It is different with Hamlet, at once simpler and more difficult. His outward opponent is the clever, unscrupulous, and very vulnerable Claudius; the essential conflict is an inner one.

Hamlet is assailed from within, Macbeth and Othello are assailed and tempted from without before the inner agony begins, while Lear struggles helplessly both against the remorse that beats inside his brain, and against the exterior powers of the storm and his devilish daughters. These tragic heroes are all very human men and all suffer intolerably more than they deserve, indeed it can scarcely be maintained that any of them save Macbeth deserves to suffer at all, yet they all suffer on account of some frailty in themselves: Macbeth for his latent ambition; Othello for his latent jealousy—and possibly for his repressed resentment against a society that makes use of him in

[1] There is another parallel between Macbeth and Othello which I do not remember having seen remarked on. When Macbeth is driven to his last desperate defence he says wearily:

> My way of life
> Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf;
> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have.

He is lonely, friendless; he has murdered his best friend Banquo, is estranged from his distracted wife, and the thanes fly from him. This loneliness and longing for friendship adds to the tragedy and is dramatically important because it sustains our sympathy for the villainous hero. Othello's loneliness makes his tragedy almost unbearable. He is isolated by his colour, but he is indispensable: 'I have done the state some service, and they know't,' he says without the slightest trace of irony. Cassio is too weak a character to mean much to Othello, but he is the nearest to a friend, and yet it is Cassio and his love Desdemona whom Iago turns into the objects of his hate. There is in this play a sinister silence in which Othello with his noble simplicity walks alone and confident, a silence broken only by the snake-like rustling of Iago at his feet. Coriolanus is too proud and self-sufficient to be dependent upon friendship, yet even he has Menenius; Hamlet has Horatio, Lear has Kent, and Brutus before he dies can proudly say:

> My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
> I found no man but he was true to me.

public but neglects him in private; Lear for his pride and rashness; Hamlet for the cynicism engendered by his mother's treachery. The frailty is not necessarily a vice, it may be a virtue, but it is a flaw in the defensive armour and thus an element of character; and in this limited sense character is destiny. Hamlet himself says as much in a speech which goes some way to describe Shakespeare's conception of a tragic hero:

> So, oft it chances in particular men,
> That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
> As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,
> Since nature cannot choose his origin,—
> By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
> Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
> Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
> The form of plausive manners, that these men,—
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
> Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
> As infinite as man may undergo—
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault.

But character is not destiny in the sense that, whatever the circumstances, men of such essential nobility would have brought the same agony upon themselves and suffered the same or a similar fate. The tragic frailty is in itself insufficient to account for the tragedy; the weakness is there, but if neither time nor place adhere, if the one fatal antagonist fails to attack at the one critical moment, there is no reason why the flaw should lead to a tragic issue. 'They met me in the day of success', are the first words that Macbeth wrote to his wife. It is circumstances beyond a man's control brought into a critical relationship with his weakness, be it a vice or a virtue, that precipitates the tragedy. And circumstance, in Shakespearean tragedy, must be accepted as a tragic fact complementary to the tragic frailty of character. The brave and noble but ambitious and superstitious Macbeth met the witches in the day of success, and Duncan decided to pass that fatal night in Lady Macbeth's castle; the lonely Othello adored Desdemona and trusted Iago; Hamlet's father died mysteriously and the man whom Hamlet despised usurped his father's place both with his mother and on the throne. But Lear would have shooed the witches off their heath; Macbeth would have been happy in Lear's position, no doubt an excellent king, and we may be sure there would have been no division of his kingdom and no nonsense from his daugh-

ters; Hamlet would simply have laughed at Iago, and Othello would have killed Claudius before the end of Act I.

This convergence of circumstance and character reminds one of Hardy's poem on the loss of the 'Titanic', *The Convergence of the Twain*, significantly enough one of the *Satires of Circumstance*, and symbolic of Hardy's own view of tragedy:

> And as the smart ship grew
> In stature, grace, and hue,
> In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.
>
> Alien they seemed to be:
> No mortal eye could see
> The intimate welding of their later history,
>
> Or sign that they were bent
> By paths coincident
> On being anon twin halves of one august event.
>
> Till the Spinner of the Years
> Said 'Now!' And each one hears,
> And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

Character is destiny, but so is circumstance, and their fitness and conjunction may lead to suffering in no way related to a man's deserts, so that we exclaim in pity and terror, 'There but for the grace of God go I'; and there for all that we can tell we may yet go. Shakespeare draws no moral; though in a sense the characters bring this destruction upon themselves, he does not insinuate that Lear and Othello, Cordelia and Desdemona suffer only what they deserve. His only comment seems to be put into the mouth of King Lear: 'Upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense.'

Cordelia, Desdemona, Ophelia: they were victims of circumstance, not of character; there was nothing that they could do but 'love, and be silent', and die. Yet not all Shakespeare's tragic heroines are as quiet as Cordelia; Juliet is by no means silent, and Cleopatra, like Falstaff, has much to say in the behalf of herself. It is relatively easy for a boy to play the part of a woman in comedy, particularly when, like Portia, Rosalind, Viola, and Imogen he takes the part of a girl pretending to be a boy; nor is the unsexed Lady Macbeth much more difficult; but it is another matter when it comes to Juliet, Desdemona, and above all Cleopatra. Shakespeare's problem, of course, was to prevent the love passages becoming ludicrous, for the sight of a man making passionate love to a woman whom the audience well knew to

be a boy, or of a boy playing the part of a voluptuous and seductive Cleopatra, might well raise an infectious titter in the theatre.

Shakespeare's solution is simple enough: there is, as Mr. Granville-Barker has observed, no passionate love-making in his plays. In the comedies it is a light-hearted affair of wit: Rosaline-Biron, Beatrice-Benedick, Rosalind-Orlando, the lovers like fencers with a wary eye on their opponent and ever on guard ready for the attack or parry and riposte. It is love at a distance. Othello has married Desdemona before the play begins, describing his courtship in surely the most beautiful passage of retrospective narrative in our literature, and we do not see them alone together until the final scene in which he murders her. Nor are Antony and Cleopatra ever seen alone, the voluptuous atmosphere being created mainly by the richness of the poetry, particularly of course by Enobarbus's picture of Cleopatra in her burning barge making the winds love-sick, and the waters amorous. 'Age cannot wither her', says Enobarbus:

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
> The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
> Become themselves in her, that the holy priests
> Bless her when she is riggish.

But unlike the holy priests we do not see her riggish.

Romeo first woos Juliet in a crowded ball-room, and next when he is separated from her by the height of her balcony. It is true that we once see them alone together for a few moments, but then the poetry is so ethereal:

> Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
> It was the nightingale, and not the lark
> That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
> Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:
> Believe me love, it was the nightingale;

and the feeling of tragedy is so imminent that there is no physical passion in the scene. 'One kiss, and I'll descend', Romeo whispers, and Juliet replies:

> O God! I have an ill-divining soul:
> Methinks I see thee, now thou art so low
> As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:
> Either my eye-sight fails, or thou look'st pale.

Romeo descends from Juliet to his death; Antony is drawn up to die in the arms of Cleopatra:

> And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast liv'd:
> Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
> Thus would I wear them out.

This is perhaps the most difficult scene in Shakespeare for a boy to play, but again physical passion is overwhelmed by the presence of death.[1] Consider finally the art with which Shakespeare turns to account the limitations of the convention, in what Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch calls 'the most beautiful love-scene in Shakespeare'—that between Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest*.

It should be remembered that Elizabethan plays were written to be seen and heard upon the stage: seen in the round and heard in the round upon an apron stage, and not to be published in book form and studied critically in the library. They were an ephemeral form of entertainment, as ephemeral as the film is to-day and scarcely to be thought of as serious literature, so that it was largely a matter of luck, and no doubt extra popularity, when a play was preserved. Of the two hundred and twenty plays in which Thomas Heywood had 'either an entire hand or at the least a main finger' only twenty-five have come down to us. The result was that the Elizabethan dramatist thought of his play as a series of theatrically effective scenes and might be careless in its construction and even deliberately falsify it, knowing that inconsistencies would pass unnoticed in the uncritical excitement of a stage production. There are plenty of examples of such carelessness and inconsistencies in Shakespeare. Of one of his earliest plays, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Dr. Johnson complains:

> The author conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the emperor at Milan, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes Protheus, after an interview with Silvia, say he has only seen her picture; and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable.

And of one of the latest, *Cymbeline*:

> To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the im-

[1] 'Shakespeare', writes Mr. Granville-Barker, 'asks nothing of his Cleopatra that a boy cannot accomplish. . . . To tell a woman to begin her study of how to play a woman's part by imagining herself a boy may seem absurd; but this is the right approach nevertheless.' Our film-producers might perhaps study Shakespeare's love-scenes with advantage.

> possibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

And it must be admitted that the ramshackle structure of the plot is in the last act on the verge of collapse.

Minor examples of errors of fact, such as Ægeon's confused account of his twin sons in *The Comedy of Errors*, or the double announcement of Portia's death in *Julius Cæsar*, could be multiplied almost indefinitely. But there are not only errors of fact and confusions of action, there are inconsistencies of character as well, for Shakespeare did not hesitate to falsify character in order to secure an effect. The lecherous old man in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the butt of housewives' wit and children's jests, resembles only physically the resourceful Falstaff of *Henry IV:* Falstaff, not only witty in himself, but the cause that wit is in other men. No wonder he complains to his creator, ' "Seese" and "putter"? Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one who makes fritters of English?' Nor is it easy to reconcile the strange scene of Falstaff's capture of the 'famous rebel', Colville, in *Part* 2, with his exploits on Gadshill and at the Battle of Shrewsbury in *Part* 1. Oliver's conversion from tyrant brother and the most unnatural that lived among men is scarcely convincing, but then Celia had to be supplied with a husband. The worldliness of Polonius's advice to Laertes is admittedly in keeping with his character, but its concentrated good sense is at odds with all his other rambling remarks; it is, however, one of the best-known speeches in *Hamlet* and is theatrically effective. The climax of *Henry IV Part* 1 is of course the meeting of Prince Henry and Hotspur at Shrewsbury and their single combat, for which the audience has been carefully prepared and artfully kept waiting. We can imagine the extravagant violence of an Elizabethan production and the excitement of the groundlings as they crowded about the stage, but can we imagine any of those cold and sober-blooded Lancastrians making the beautiful and generous valedictory speech over the body of Hotspur? Such a speech is obviously called for and Prince Henry has to make it, but it sounds strange, to say the least of it, coming from those thin lips. And stranger still are the words of Aufidius over the body of Coriolanus; no sooner has Aufidius murdered him to the cry of 'unholy braggart', 'insolent villain', than he says:

> My rage is gone,
> And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up:
> Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.

Beat thou the drum; that it speak mournfully;
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.

Savonarola Brown had profited from his reading of *Coriolanus* almost as much as from that of *Hamlet*.

These inconsistencies are sometimes forced on Shakespeare by the exigencies of the plots which, as Johnson remarked, 'are often so loosely formed, that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued, that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design'. Shakespeare rarely troubled to invent a plot, though he would generally modify it and add new situations and characters—as in *Much Ado*, where the almost tragic story of Hero is taken from Bandello, the comedy of Beatrice may owe something to Castiglione, but the farce of Dogberry is Shakespeare's own invention. He did not therefore invent a plot to suit preconceived characters, but had to create characters to suit a given plot. This is important, as it accounts not only for some of the inconsistencies but also for many of the improbabilities. 'His opening scenes', writes Sir Walter Raleigh, 'are often a kind of postulate, which the spectator or reader is asked to grant. At this point of the play improbability is of no account; the intelligent reader will accept the situation as a gift, and will become alert and critical only when the next step is taken, and he is asked to concede the truth of the argument—given these persons in this situation, such and such events will follow.' Thus, if an old king divides his kingdom among his daughters in return for their protestations of love; if an ambitious general meets three witches in the day of success; if a black man marries a beautiful Venetian girl; if a prince sees the ghost of his father who tells him that he has been murdered; if a Duke of Milan is put to sea in a rotten carcass of a butt with his baby daughter and his books of magic—then all the rest will follow. It is the method of the fairy-tale and of Corporal Trim's story of the King of Bohemia, unhappily lost betwixt him and Uncle Toby:

> There was a certain king of Bohemia, but in whose reign, except his own, I am not able to inform your honour—
>
> I do not desire it of thee, Trim, by any means, cried my uncle Toby.
>
> —It was a little before the time, an' please your honour, when giants were beginning to leave off breeding:—but in what year of our Lord that was—

The greater improbability, which must be accepted as something out-

side the plot and beyond the author's control, is put first so that there is no difficulty in accepting the rest of the story, which in Shakespeare follows logically enough once the initial postulate has been granted. It is the opposite of Defoe's and Swift's method, which is to prepare the reader to accept the improbable or incredible by being as matter of fact as possible to begin with:

> My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emmanuel College in Cambridge at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies.

This adaptation of old stories and other men's plots accounts also for what Johnson calls Shakespeare's 'first defect':

> He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and, at the close, dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

Johnson, in short, takes up the extreme classical position (based maybe on the queasy feeling that biologically speaking art is a blasphemy and only to be justified on moral grounds), that art should be an inspiration to virtuous action, and accuses Shakespeare of the Romantic hedonistic view that the object of art is primarily to give pleasure. Johnson's over-literal and pedantic interpretation leaves little room for compromise; but it is not necessary to point a moral (as Hazlitt says, *The Taming of the Shrew* is almost the only one of Shakespeare's comedies that has a downright moral), to reward virtue and punish vice, in order to inspire a virtuous way of life; if the artist is not vicious in object or manner, as Fletcher so often is and the Restoration dramatists nearly always are, if the pleasure he gives is spiritual rather than sensual, if there is anything in Keats's axiom that truth is beauty, beauty truth, then the Romantic writer may inspire virtuous action incidentally every bit as much as does the classical writer with his deliberate didacticism. Johnson tells us that he was so shocked by Cordelia's death that he could not bear to read the last scenes of the

play, 'for Shakespeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice'. But, though Cordelia's death is less inevitable, an accident almost, he might have raised similar objections to the fate of Ophelia and Desdemona. There was a paradoxical streak of sentiment, almost of moral cowardice, in this very courageous apostle of good sense.

But it *is* true that in his lighter plays Shakespeare sometimes sacrifices virtue to convenience, that in a limited sense 'he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and, at the close, dismisses them without further care'. Falstaff—scarcely a virtuous character perhaps—dies of a broken heart; in Nym's language, 'the king hath run bad humours on the knight': in Pistol's, 'his heart is fracted and corroborate'. And incidentally the simple loyalty of Fluellen and Williams is exploited by this king of good fellows with his exceedingly queer sense of humour. Such a wanton infliction of indignity is unpardonable, and though of very minor importance, lends some show of truth to Johnson's accusation. Not without justification does Malvolio protest, 'Madam, you have done me wrong, notorious wrong'; and Shylock, deprived by the insufferable Portia and her unspeakable friends of all that makes his life worth living, his money, his daughter, and his religion, creeps away to die: 'I pray you, give me leave to go from hence, I am not well.'

It is, however, his women who suffer the most casual treatment and sometimes intolerable indignities. Julia undergoes the humiliation of following and being accepted by the would-be ravisher Proteus; Katharine is tamed by Petruchio into saying:

> Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
> And place your hands below your husband's foot:
> In token of which duty, if he please,
> My hand is ready, may it do him ease.

Portia and Jessica are married for their money by a couple of adventurous Jew-baiters; Hero accepts the man who when she came to marry him in church rejected her as an 'approved wanton', 'a rotten orange'; Celia is paired off with the man who had tried to murder his brother; Viola marries a sentimental duke who does not know his own mind; to win Bertram Helena takes the place in bed of another girl, Diana, with whom he thinks he is lying; Mariana gains Angelo by the same device, Isabella being persuaded to play the same part as Diana in *All's Well* by the Duke Vincentio, whom she marries after he has cruelly deceived her and sent her to prison; Marina accepts the man who threatened to assault her in a brothel; and Imogen is restored

to a husband who ordered his servant to kill her. It seems impossible to absolve Shakespeare entirely from the accusation that he sometimes sacrifices virtue to convenience unless we maintain, as no doubt we should, that the women he created are often too good for the rôles they have to fill in his borrowed plots, which is only another way of charging him with inconsistency of characterisation.

Shakespeare's young heroines *are* heroines, virtuous, generally practical, often witty, always patient, and above all courageous and loyal. There are few half-tones in their painting; consider Julia, Silvia, Rosaline, Juliet, the two Helenas, Hermia, Lady Percy, Hero, Beatrice, Rosalind, Celia, Viola, Brutus's Portia, Ophelia, Isabella, Desdemona, Cordelia, Virgilia, Marina, Imogen, Perdita, Miranda. There is Portia, Bassanio's Portia, but as Hazlitt mildly puts it, 'she is not a very great favourite with us'; Cleopatra is not a young heroine, and Cressida is meant to be weak and vicious. But what of the heroes? There are the delightful young men, not always over-virtuous perhaps, Biron, Mercutio, Benedick; there are Hotspur and Edgar, and the more colourless Romeo, Orlando, Troilus, Florizel, and Ferdinand; but what are we to make of Proteus, Bassanio, Prince Henry, Bertram, Vincentio, Claudio, and Posthumus? Did Shakespeare really admire Henry V, the bully on a grand scale who won his Katharine much as Petruchio won his? But again, these characters can be accounted for by the fact that they had to fill a part in the old plots—they are not, it will be noticed, characters invented by Shakespeare—and Shakespeare seems to apologise for them when he makes Proteus say:

> O heaven, were man
> But constant, he were perfect! That one error
> Fills him with faults; makes him run through all the sins;

and Orsino:

> For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
> Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
> More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
> Than women's are;

and in the lovely song in *Much Ado*:

> Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
> Men were deceivers ever,
> One foot in sea and one on shore,
> To one thing constant never.

Shakespeare makes ample amends when he is not driven by the exigencies of his plots to delineate cads; then we have Mercutio, Faulconbridge, Fluellen, Benedick, Jaques, Sir Toby, Enobarbus, or Bottom, Falstaff, Shallow, Dogberry, Touchstone, Parolles and Autolycus; and we have a sneaking sympathy even for pimps like Pandarus and Pompey, and bawds like Mistress Overdone. This is because of the all-embracing sympathy and tolerance of Shakespeare himself, his constant wonder at the infinite variety of people, and his almost divine compassion for them; 'O brave new world, that has such people in't,' exclaims Miranda in his last play. He does not represent man, as Aristotle said comedy should do, as worse than in actual life, nor for that matter does he represent them in tragedy as better than in actual life, but as they really are. Shakespeare lies in the authentic English tradition of pity and tolerance, of Chaucer, Addison, Sterne, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy. He is rarely satirical; though he sometimes laughs at the absurdities of his characters he generally laughs with them, and he never jeers at them; he loves them too dearly for that. Hazlitt, as usual, goes to the heart of the matter, and gives a sufficient answer to Johnson:

> Shakespear was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. The object of the pedantic moralist is to find out the bad in everything: his was to shew that 'there is some soul of goodness in things evil.' . . . In one sense, Shakespear was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of all moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learned from her. He shewed the greatest knowledge of humanity with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.

And yet in spite of their apparent reality Shakespeare's characters are not real; like Cézanne's pictures they are a representation of life, not a reproduction of it. As a painter has to work within the spatial limits of his canvas, so Shakespeare has to force a play within the temporal limits of a two hours' traffic, 'turning the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass'. He himself explains his difficulty in the Choruses of *Henry V*:

> Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen,
> Our bending author hath pursu'd the story;
> In little room confining mighty men,
> Mangling by starts the full course of their glory:

and he implores the audience to use their imaginations, to 'brook abridgment', and to mind 'true things by what their mockeries be'. Here, it is true, he is referring primarily to limitation of space, to the cramping effect of this unworthy scaffold, this cockpit, this wooden O of the Globe theatre. But he has to overcome a similar difficulty of time, to compress within two or three hours the story of Macbeth's degeneration, and of Othello's change from a man possessed by love to one possessed by hate. To secure this end he has to resort to violent abridgment, compression, and distortion. His problem is similar to that of the painter, but his solution is the opposite. The painter cannot compete with nature, for his pigments from white to black are only a fraction of her immense range which starts with the blinding light of the sun, so that he has to pitch his painting in a lower key with subtler gradations of intensity. Shakespeare also, limited by time, cannot compete with nature, but he equals her range and represents her by more violent transitions and rapid foreshortenings, by abstracting everything that is not dramatically relevant. It is as absurd, therefore, to complain, as did Rymer and Tolstoy, that Shakespeare's tragedies are not true to life as to complain that Van Gogh's paintings of the sun are no more like the sun than Shakespeare's mistress's eyes. They are works of art, not nature, and they give the effect of reality only because they are distortions, like the huge and wonderful figures in the clerestory windows of Chartres cathedral.

Consider the case of *Othello*. The speed of the first act is comparatively leisurely; in Act II the pace quickens and Iago begins his attack obliquely by sapping Cassio's position; but it is not until Act III, Scene 3, that he launches his direct assault on Othello. It begins at line 90 when Desdemona and Emilia go out:

Oth. Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.
Iago. My noble lord,—
Oth. What dost thou say, Iago?
Iago. Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?
Oth. He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?
Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

At line 231 Othello's faith falters, exposing the slightest flaw in his defence:

And yet, how nature erring from itself—

But it is enough for Iago, and like a snake he strikes, then glides away leaving the venom to do its work:

> If I do prove her haggard,
> Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
> I 'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind
> To prey at fortune.

When Desdemona returns Othello recovers:

> If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
> I'll not believe 't.

but Iago knows that his victim is helpless, and utters the beautiful and horrible incantation:

> Not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owedst yesterday.

Nor is he mistaken; Othello loses control of himself and exposes all his quivering spirit to Iago's final blow:

> And may: but how? how satisfied, my lord?
> Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
> Behold her topp'd?

And at the end of the scene, perhaps the most terrible scene in literature, Othello cries in agony:

> Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
> Come, go with me apart: I will withdraw,
> To furnish me with some swift means of death
> For the fair devil.

And all within four hundred lines! It is not, of course, true to life; a man like Othello, so many fathom deep in love, could not so simply and so speedily be convinced of his wife's infidelity. But it is true as a work of art; within the limitations under which Shakespeare had to work, when time must be closed up like a fan, it is terribly and intensely true. It is a representation of life in a purer yet intenser element than ours, an element from which all baser matter has been exhausted and into which is packed that only which makes Othello's agony, and time itself is huddled. Yet, lest the audience should be

upset by this abstraction of irrelevance and concentration of relevance, Shakespeare is careful to introduce when necessary a character who, by voicing our possible protests, relieves our feelings and prepares us to accept the dramatic and poetic truth. Thus Emilia, by expressing our feelings alleviates our resentment and horror at Othello's blind credulity:

> I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
> Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
> Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.

and again when, though too late, she cries:

> Thou art rash as fire, to say
> That she was false: O, she was heavenly true! . . .
> O gull! O dolt!
> As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed—

all our indignation is spent and pity alone is left. Then, when Iachimo, in a scene remarkably like that between Iago and Othello, convinces Posthumus that Imogen is faithless, Philario in the character of Chorus speaks for the audience:

> Sir, be patient:
> This is not strong enough to be believed
> Of one persuaded well of—

So does that satisfactory lady Paulina in *The Winter's Tale*:

> Good queen, my lord,
> Good queen: I say good queen;
> And would by combat make her good, so were I
> A man, the worst about you.

And Kent speaks to Lear even more bluntly than does Paulina to Leontes:

> What wouldst thou do, old man?
> Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
> When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,
> When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom,
> And in thy best consideration check
> This hideous rashness.

In an amusing passage in one of his lectures Coleridge remarks:

> We have often heard Shakspeare spoken of as a child of nature, and some of his modern imitators, without the genius to copy nature, by resorting to real incidents, and treating them in a certain way, have produced that stage-phenomenon which is neither tragic nor comic, nor tragi-comic, nor comi-tragic, but sentimental. This sort of writing depends upon some very affecting circumstances, and in its greatest excellence aspires no higher than the genius of an onion,—the power of drawing tears; while the author, acting the part of a ventriloquist, distributes his own insipidity among the characters, if characters they can be called, which have no marked and distinguishing features.

If it be admitted that Shakespeare's genius is something higher than that of an onion, and that his characters are more than a ventriloquist's puppets, if we agree that they are in fact more real than living men, or at least give the illusion of greater reality, how does Shakespeare bring them to life? In the early plays, as we have seen, when he was learning his craft, many of the characters, particularly the main and serious ones, do not in fact come to life, and even in his later plays minor figures are not always highly individualized; and rightly so, for too much vitality in them would detract from that of the major characters. In *The Tempest*, for instance, Antonio and Sebastian are little more than a pair of interchangeable stage-villains, and it would be folly to attempt to read too much into them.

The simplest way of revealing character is, of course, by the soliloquy, a convention which Shakespeare employs from first to last, from *Richard III* to *The Tempest*, though not indiscriminately, but with an increasing range of subtlety. Richard III, like a stock character in the medieval plays, ingenuously labels himself as the villain of the melodrama—'I am determined to prove a villain'; and even as late as *Henry IV* Prince Henry with equal candour gratuitously informs us that he is the hypocrite of the play:

> I know you all, and will awhile uphold
> The unyok'd humour of your idleness. . . .
> I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;
> Redeeming time when men think least I will.[1]

The soliloquies on suicide and murder of Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth[2] illustrate admirably the development of Shakespeare's

[1] This speech is, incidentally, an excellent example of Shakespeare's transitional style—half lyrical, half dramatic.

> To smother up his beauty from the world . . .
> By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
> Of vapours that did seem to strangle him,

are lines that might have come from the *Sonnets*.

[2] These are quoted in full in Chapter IV, as are a number of other soliloquies.

dramatic employment of the convention; they are not merely superficial pieces of information handed out to the audience like Richard's and Henry's, but by virtue of their thought, language, imagery, even of their rhythms, are profound spiritual revelations.

Brutus and Othello are the two simplest characters, and their simplicity is reflected in their speech. Brutus is logical and his transitions of thought are rational rather than emotional; the elaborately developed figure of ambition and the ladder is typical of his integrity and scrupulous analysis of motive (though it must be admitted that it is also typical of Shakespeare's manner at this period). Yet he has some of Hamlet's love of thought for its own sake, and there is a touch of Hamlet in his speech:

> It must be by his death . . .
> He would be crown'd:
> How that might change his nature, there's the question.
> It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
> And that craves wary walking. Crown him! That!

which reminds us irresistibly of:

> To be, or not to be, that is the question: . . .
> To die, to sleep,
> No more: and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to,— 't is a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep:—
> To sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub.

But Hamlet's thought is much less logical than Brutus's, and the rapid sequence of images reflects the emotional leaps of his mind:

> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
> With this regard their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action.

All the simplicity, nobility, and emotional depth of Othello's nature are revealed in his slow-moving lyrical utterance and simple imagery; and we hear in the astonishing three-fold repetition of the word *cause* and the five-fold repetition of *light* an echo of his agonised cry, 'but yet the pity of it, Iago! O, Iago! the pity of it, Iago!' but now resolved into a harmony that is almost serene:

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul;
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause . . .
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume.

Compare the pitiful serenity of Othello, his resolution, and almost sublime belief in the justice of his cause, with Macbeth's limed and struggling soul as reflected in his agitated imagery:

If it were done when 't is done, then 't were well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We 'ld jump the life to come.

But we learn more about the characters from what they say about one another than from what they say about themselves. According to Coleridge:

> The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader; they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakspeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Consider, for instance, the reflections of Lear in the mirroring words of Goneril, Regan, the Fool, Kent, Gloucester, and Edgar; of Gloucester in those of Edmund and Edgar; of Goneril in those of Cordelia, Kent, Lear, and Albany; while our impression of Cordelia is derived very largely from hearsay: 'our joy, although the last, not

least'; 'since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away'; 'patience and sorrow strove who should express her goodliest'; 'kind and dear princess'; 'her voice was ever soft, gentle and low'.

It is not, however, what the characters tell us about themselves or even about one another that is the real and final secret of their vitality; it is what they say about any subject under the sun, and how they say it. As Logan Pearsall Smith so wisely remarks, 'Shakespeare's main device for bringing his characters into existence is simply to make them talk themselves alive'. It is not, of course, true, as Pope maintained in a curious outburst of almost Romantic enthusiasm, that 'had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker'; but he was considerably nearer the truth than Tolstoy, for whom 'all his characters speak, not a language of their own but always one and the same Shakespearean, affected, unnatural language, which not only could they not speak, but which no real people could ever have spoken anywhere'. It is overwhelmingly true of the main and of many of the subordinate characters in Shakespeare's plays that their speech is a reflection of themselves: the words they use, their thoughts and transitions, their images, even their rhythms are peculiar and vitalising; they do indeed talk themselves alive:

> No sure, my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a star danc'd, and under that was I born.

> All studies here I solemnly defy,
> Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke:
> And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,
> But that I think his father loves him not
> And would be glad he met with some mischance,
> I would have him poison'd with a pot of ale.

> Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal: 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

> Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

> Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
> The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
> The royal banner, and all quality,
> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.

Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men.

One last word. It does not seem to have been remarked that though Shakespeare treats of almost every possible form of relationship there is no play in which that between mother and daughter can be said to be the principal theme, or indeed a theme of any importance at all. The majority of the stories are concerned mainly with the affairs of lovers, but there are many plays in which some other relationship is either the main or at least an important part of the action; man and wife: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*; brother and sister: *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*; father and son: *Henry IV*, *Lear*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*; mother and son: *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *All's Well*. The relationship between father and daughter seems always to have attracted Shakespeare: *Titus Andronicus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Lear*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, while *Pericles* and *The Tempest* are almost exclusively concerned with father and daughter, with Pericles and Marina, Prospero and Miranda. But of the mother-daughter relationship there is scarcely a trace. It is true that Perdita is restored to Hermione, and Marina to Thaisa, but only incidentally, because they have previously been restored to their fathers; and we scarcely think of *Romeo and Juliet* in terms of Juliet and Lady Capulet, or of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in those of sweet Anne and Mistress Page. Yet these—Perdita, Marina, Juliet, and Anne Page—are the only heroines who have, as far as we know, living mothers at all, and of these Hermione and Thaisa are thought to be dead; while the only other women whose mothers appear are Katharine of France, and Diana in *All's Well*. Think of all the other young heroines, of Lavinia, Julia, Silvia, Rosaline, Katharine the Shrew, Bianca, Helena, Hermia, Jessica, Portia, Hero, Beatrice, Rosalind, Celia, Viola, Olivia, Ophelia, Cressida, Helena, Isabella, Desdemona, Cordelia, Virgilia, Imogen, Miranda, and it is really very remarkable that none of them has a mother. It cannot be that Shakespeare cut their mothers out because boy actors were incapable of taking their parts, for there are plenty of examples of middle-aged and elderly women in the plays. It may be that Shakespeare consciously or unconsciously avoided the mother-daughter relationship owing to some disturbing domestic experience, and in

compensation emphasised that between father and daughter instead. Or it may simply be that mothers are often dramatically a nuisance: that competent mothers would have seen to it that Julia and Helena did not run away from home after young men, that Hero, Helena, Isabella, and Imogen were not insulted and humiliated by insufferable youths and jealous husbands, and that Ophelia, Desdemona, and Cordelia were not made the innocent victims of their lover's, husband's, or father's passions and follies.

It is significant that in the Bandello story which was the original of *Much Ado*, Hero (Fenicia) had a mother, and that in the first stage-direction of the play Shakespeare gives her one, Innogen. She is mentioned again in the stage direction at the beginning of Act II, but nowhere does she speak or give any indication of her existence. It seems probable that Shakespeare originally gave Hero a mother, but when he came to the church scene realised that she would have torn Don John's flimsy forgeries to tatters and whipped him together with the Prince and Claudio out of church with the lash of her tongue. She could scarcely be made to act with the imbecility of Leonato, so Shakespeare was forced to abandon her.

Shakespeare seems to have liked his heroines to be free agents—sometimes they are fatherless as well as motherless, and often they appear to be the only child—free to act without the restraining influence of a sensible mother, free to run away from home, to disguise themselves as boys, and to marry whom they choose. However this may be, and however stupid and unworthy of their daughters some of the fathers may be, nobody has ever more beautifully depicted the relationship between father and daughter than Shakespeare:

> If I have too austerely punish'd you,
> Your compensation makes amends; for I
> Have given you here a thrid of mine own life,
> Or that for which I live. . . . O Ferdinand,
> Do not smile at me that I boast her off,
> For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
> And make it halt behind her.

CHAPTER VI

QUARTOS AND FOLIOS

IN Shakespeare's time the London book trade was in the hands of The Stationers' Company of London. This Company, with an elected Master and two Wardens, had been incorporated by royal charter in 1557, and save for the books printed by the university presses of Oxford and Cambridge had the monopoly of printing for the whole of England. All the London booksellers and most of the printers were freemen of the Company, who by entering their 'copy' in the Stationers' Register, and by paying a fee of 4*d.*, later 6*d.*, secured the sole right of selling a book, the Company imposing severe penalties on breaches of copyright. Books had to be licensed, and in 1586 by an Order of the Court of Star Chamber licensing was vested in the Archbishop of Canterbury and his authorised deputies; in 1607 the Master of the Revels became *ex officio* the licenser of plays.

The normal procedure, then, before the publication of a book would be for a member of the Company to secure licence to print, and then enter for his copy in the Stationers' Register and pay his fee. Thus, for the first of Shakespeare's plays to be entered we read in the Stationers' Register:

> 1594. vj^{to} die ffebruarii. John Danter. Entred for his Copye vnder thandes of bothe the wardens a booke intituled a Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus. vj^{d}.

In 1607, when Sir George Buck was Deputy-Master of the Revels, is the entry:

> 1607. 26 Novembris. Nathanael Butter John Busby. Entred for their Copie under thandes of Sir George Buck knight and Thwardens A booke called. Master William Shakespeare his historye of Kinge Lear, as yt was played before the Kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon Sainct Stephens night at Christmas Last, by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the Globe on the Banksyde vj^{d}.

And before Blount and Jaggard published the First Folio they entered the plays that had not already been issued as Quartos.[1]

[1] They entered only 16 of the 18. *King John* and *The Taming of The Shrew*, neither of which had appeared as a Quarto, are omitted, presumably because they passed as reprints of the old plays, *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* and *The Taming of A Shrew*, on which they were based. *The thirde parte of Henry the sixt* must refer to *Henry VI Part* 1, as Parts 2 and 3 had been published as Quartos.

8° Nouembris 1623. Mr Blounte Isaak Jaggard. Entred for their Copie vnder the hands of Mr Doctor Worrall and Mr Cole, warden, Mr William Shakspeers Comedyes Histories, and Tragedyes soe manie of the said Copies as are not formerly entred to other men, viz. Comedyes. The Tempest. The two gentlemen of Verona. Measure for Measure. The Comedy of Errors. As You Like It. All's well that ends well. Twelft night. The winters tale. Histories. The thirde parte of Henry the sixt. Henry the eight. Coriolanus. Timon of Athens. Julius Cæsar. Tragedies. Mackbeth. Anthonie and Cleopatra. Cymbeline.

It is probable that, with the exception of the first editions of *Venus and Adonis*, and of *Lucrece* dedicated to his patron the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare had little or nothing to do with the publication of any of his works. Plays, in Shakespeare's lifetime, were scarcely regarded as literature; they were entertainment for the stage rather than serious reading for the study; and even as late as the year of Shakespeare's death Ben Jonson was rebuked for his presumption in referring to a volume of his plays as his 'Works'.

A dramatist's play would normally be bought by a company of actors for something between £60 and £100 of our money, when it would become their property, the author losing all financial interest in it. Normally the players were reluctant to print, either because publication might spoil the receipts of the theatre or because plays were a reserve capital that might be used in an emergency, so that most of the plays produced in Elizabeth's and James I's reigns were never printed, and many of them have been lost. In the years 1586-9, for instance, no plays were entered for publication in the Stationers' Register, though in 1594 there were twenty-three, possibly because the players were in need of money after the plague which led to the closing of the theatres for the greater part of the years 1593-4, and in 1600 there were nineteen, five of them Shakespeare's, perhaps to raise money for the building of the Globe theatre in 1599 and the Fortune in 1600.

Before the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays was published in the Folio of 1623 the poems and plays on the following page had already been published separately in Quarto form (reprints of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were mostly in Octavo):

Of the nineteen plays published as Quartos those marked B represent texts that are so abridged and corrupt that they have earned for themselves the name of the 'bad' Quartos, and are no doubt the 'stolen and surreptitious copies' referred to by Heminge and Condell in their Preface to the First Folio. 'There are', writes Sir Edmund

Date of Publication.	Work.	Entered S.R. by	Publisher of Q1.	Printer of Q1.	Number of reprints before F1.
1593	Ven. & Ad.	Field	Field	Field	10
1594	Lucrece	Harrison	Harrison	Field	5
1594	T. Andron.	Danter	Danter	Danter	2
B. 1594	2 Hen. VI	Millington	Millington	Creede	2 J.
B. 1595	3 Hen. VI	(Pavier, 1602)	Millington	Short	2 J.
B. 1597	Rom. & Jul.		Danter	Danter	
1597	Rich. II	Wise	Wise	Sims	4
1597	Rich. III	Wise	Wise	Sims	5
1598	1 Hen. IV	Wise	Wise	Short	5
C? 1598	L. L. Lost	(Ling, 1607)	Burby	White	
C. 1599	Rom. & Jul.	(Ling, 1607)	Burby (Q 2)	Creede	2
1600	2 Hen. IV	Wise & Aspley	Wise & Aspley	Sims	
1600	M. N. Dream	Fisher	Fisher	Allde?	1 J.
1600	M. of Ven.	1. Roberts 2. Heyes	Heyes	Roberts	1 J.
1600	Much Ado	1. 'To be staied' 2. Wise & Aspley	Wise & Aspley	Sims	
B. 1600	Henry V.	1. 'To be staied' 2. Pavier	Millington & Busby	Creede	2 J.
B. 1602	M. Wives	1. Busby 2. Johnson	Johnson	Creede	1 J.
B. 1603	Hamlet	Roberts	Ling & Trundell	Sims	
C. 1604	Hamlet		Ling (Q 2)	Roberts	1
P. 1608	Lear	Butter & Busby	Butter	Snowden	1 J.
P. 1609	Pericles	Blount	Gosson	White	3 J.
1609	Tr. & Cr.	1. Roberts 2. Bonian & Walley	Bonian & Walley	Eld	
1609	Sonnets	Thorpe	Thorpe	Eld	
1622	Othello	Walkley	Walkley	Okes	

B: 'Bad' Quarto. J: Reprinted by Jaggard, 1619.
C: 'Corrected and augmented' Quarto. P: 'Poor' Quarto.

Chambers, 'constant omissions leaving *lacunæ* in the sense, constant paraphrases, constant inversions of the order of sentences, and dislocations in the sequence of dialogue and episodes. The metre is bungled; verse lines are wrongly divided; prose is printed as verse and verse as prose. . . . The dislocation of matter extends to the incorporation in scenes of phrases which really belong to earlier scenes or even to later scenes.'[1]

[1] *William Shakespeare*, vol. i, p. 156.

It used to be assumed that these corrupt texts had been obtained by unscrupulous publishers who sent shorthand writers to the theatres and whose notes were later put together by an editor. But as we know of no adequate system of shorthand before 1602, and as shorthand notes would not account for the dislocation of matter, the theory has been rejected in favour of another. It is now thought that these texts were reproduced from memory, possibly by actors in the provinces who had previously appeared in the plays in London, and then sold surreptitiously to a printer on their return to town. This theory is supported by the fact that the speeches of some of the characters are much more accurate than others: thus in the 1603 Quarto of *Hamlet* the parts of Marcellus and Voltimand are well reproduced while those of most of the other characters are mutilated and abridged, as though the actors who took these minor parts remembered their own lines but were much less accurate when it came to reproducing the rest of the play.

It was, no doubt, to prevent the public's being abused with these surreptitious copies that the corrected and enlarged Quartos (marked C) of *Romeo and Juliet* (1599) and of *Hamlet* (1604) were issued. Possibly, too, the *Love's Labour's Lost* Quarto of 1598, the first of Shakespeare's plays to be published with his name, was the reply to an earlier and garbled version similar to those of the other bad Quartos.

The two late plays marked P, *King Lear* (1608) and *Pericles* (1609), though not so bad as the 'bad' Quartos, may nevertheless be ranked as poor: the punctuation is bad, there are mislinings and omissions, and long passages of verse are printed as prose. They are late enough to have been reproduced by John Willis's system of shorthand popularised by the publication of his book *The Art of Stenography* in 1602; and that this method of reproduction was sometimes practised is proved by Thomas Heywood, who at about this time wrote in the prologue to his *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, how,

> Some by stenography drew
> The plot: put it in print: (scarce one word true.)

Eight of these plays (marked J), *Henry VI* 2 *and* 3, *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Henry V, The Merry Wives of Windsor, King Lear*, and *Pericles*, were reprinted in 1619, many of them with false dates. Recent research has proved that these plays, together with two others, *Sir John Oldcastle* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, both of which were ascribed to Shakespeare, were, in spite of their misleading dates, printed in 1619 by William Jaggard, who four years

The Tragicall Hiſtorie of

HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke.

Enter two Centinels. {now call'd Bernardo & Francisco —

1. STand: who is that?
2. TIs I.
1. O you come moſt carefully vpon your watch,
2. And if you meete *Marcellus* and *Horatio*,
The partners of my watch, bid them make haſte.
1. I will: See who goes there.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Hor. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And leegemen to the Dane,
O farewell honeſt ſouldier, who hath releeued you?
1. *Barnardo* hath my place, giue you good night.
Mar. Holla, *Barnardo.*
2. Say, is *Horatio* there?
Hor. A peece of him.
2. Welcome *Horatio*, welcome good *Marcellus.*
Mar. What hath this thing appear'd againe to night.
2. I haue ſeene nothing.
Mar. *Horatio* ſayes tis but our fantaſie,
And wil not let beliefe take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded ſight twice ſeene by vs,

later printed the First Folio. The history of these publications is obscure, but it seems probable that Jaggard planned to issue these ten plays in one volume, although the texts of six of them were corrupt or poor, and two were not by Shakespeare at all. Not unnaturally Shakespeare's Company, the King's Men, complained, and Jaggard issued the plays separately, some of them with false dates to disguise the fact that they were a new edition.

The men whose methods are not above suspicion are John Danter, who published the surreptitious edition of *Romeo and Juliet* without registration; Thomas Millington, the publisher of the reported texts of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, and that of *Henry V*, which the Chamberlain's Men had tried to 'stay'; and John Busby, who was associated with Millington. On the other hand Cuthbert Burby, the publisher of the 'corrected and augmented' *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and Andrew Wise, who was responsible for five good Quartos, two in association with William Aspley, appear to have been exemplary.

In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first collected edition of his plays was published in Folio form, a large volume of nine hundred double-column pages. This First Folio was edited by two of Shakespeare's fellow actors and friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell, and printed by Jaggard and Blount; its price was probably about £1, and something between two hundred and fifty and a thousand copies were printed 'at the Charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley'.

The title-page reads:

> Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies Published according to the True Originall Copies. London. Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

And again the head-title affirms that the plays are:

> The Workes of William Shakespeare, containing all his Comedies, Histories and Tragedies: Truely set forth, according to their first Originall.

This reiterated claim that the plays are printed from Shakespeare's original manuscripts is further insisted upon in the epistle to 'the great variety of readers' with which Heminge and Condell introduce them:

> Where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious

impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them.

Not only this, but they tell us that Shakespeare's 'mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers'. We can, therefore, scarcely doubt that for many, or perhaps most, of the plays Heminge and Condell really had access to Shakespeare's original manuscripts.

At the same time, the epistle, which is primarily an appeal to the public to buy the book, should be interpreted with caution. The editors do not say that *all* the copies were stolen and surreptitious, but only that *divers* of them were, and no doubt they were referring to the six 'bad' Quartos; nor did they print from manuscripts when good Quarto texts were available, reproduction from which was so much easier, though no doubt they referred to them. Only when there was no Quarto, or no good Quarto, had they to rely on the original manuscript, or failing that on a transcript.

The plays are printed in the following order (Q indicating those that had already appeared as Quartos):

Comedies.	Histories.	Tragedies.
Tempest.	King John.	(Q. Troilus and Cressida.)
Two Gentlemen of Verona.	Q. Richard II.	Coriolanus.
Q. Merry Wives of Windsor.	Q. Henry IV Pt. 1.	Q. Titus Andronicus.
Measure for Measure.	Q. Henry IV Pt. 2.	Q. Romeo and Juliet.
Comedy of Errors.	Q. Henry V.	Timon of Athens.
Q. Much Ado About Nothing.	Henry VI Pt. 1.	Julius Cæsar.
Q. Love's Labour's Lost.	Q. Henry VI Pt. 2.	Macbeth.
Q. Midsummer Night's Dream.	Q. Henry VI Pt. 3.	Q. Hamlet.
Q. Merchant of Venice.	Q. Richard III.	Q. King Lear.
As You Like It.	Henry VIII.	Q. Othello.
Taming of the Shrew		Antony and Cleopatra.
All's Well that Ends Well.		Cymbeline.
Twelfth Night.		
Winter's Tale.		

The Histories are arranged in historical sequence, and apart from *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Coriolanus*, the Comedies and Tragedies make some approximation to the chronological order of composition. *Troilus and Cressida* is not included in the list of contents, but is printed first in the Tragedy section. *Pericles* is omitted, but was included in the second issue of the Third Folio, 1664.

Altogether, therefore, there are thirty-six plays in the First Folio which constitutes the Shakespearean canon. Of these thirty-six plays:

18 have no Quarto, so that we depend on the Folio version for their texts, the majority of which were probably set up as Heminge and Condell claimed 'according to their first original'—that is, from Shakespeare's own manuscripts—though some of them, *Macbeth* in particular, have theatrical cuts and interpolations. *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, the texts of which are not good, may have been reproduced from a transcript, a prompt-copy, or even from the scripts of the parts given to the individual players.

18 have at least one Quarto text as well as that of the Folio, and these may be further sub-divided:

2 plays: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, with 'bad' first Quartos, but good corrected second Quartos on which the Folio text is based.

4 plays: *Henry VI*, *Parts* 2 *and* 3, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with only 'bad' Quarto texts. These were treated like the plays without a Quarto version, and a good text, set up from the original manuscript or a transcript, was substituted for the corrupt one.

14 plays (including the second Quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*), with approximately parallel Quarto and Folio texts. These were nearly all set up from the latest Quarto, though sometimes modified after comparison with a manuscript. It is not surprising that some of the first Quarto texts are better than the reprints in the Folio, for generally speaking the greater the number of reprints the greater the accumulation of errors. Even in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which was reproduced from the only Quarto, the printer, according to Professor Dover Wilson's calculation, corrected 117 errors, reproduced 59, and added 137 of his own. Neither *Othello*, which was published too late, nor *Hamlet*, was set up from a Quarto text.

The Second Folio was printed in 1632 from the First; it made some improvements in spelling and metre, and corrected many errors, though it added new ones of its own. On the whole the improvements are considerable.

The Third Folio of 1663 was printed from the Second, but to a second issue of 1664 were added *Pericles* and six spurious plays, *The London Prodigal*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *Locrine*, *Cromwell*, *The Puritan Widow*, and *Sir John Oldcastle*, all of which had already been

published as the work either of William Shakespeare or of W.S., presumably to increase their sales; *Sir John Oldcastle*, however, had been written by Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathway, who according to Henslowe's *Diary* received £10 for it.

The Fourth Folio was set up from the Third in 1685. It corrects some misprints, makes some new ones, modernises the spelling, and retains the spurious pieces.

In the Folios the plays are divided into Acts, and generally into Scenes as well. The entry of characters is indicated, but not always their exits. Sometimes the names of the actors appear instead of those of the characters, as in *Much Ado*, where 'Iacke Wilson', the singer, replaces the 'Musicke' of the Quarto, thus showing that the compositor was working from a Quarto that had been used as a prompt-copy. The location of the scene is not given, but when important this is generally indicated by the opening words:

> Thou art perfect then, our ship hath toucht upon
> The Deserts of *Bohemia*.

There is no consistency about the Folio. *Love's Labour's Lost* is divided merely into Acts, so is *Henry V*; six plays, including *Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra*, have no divisions at all. *The Winter's Tale*, *Timon of Athens*, and others have 'The Names of the Actors' at the end. *The Tempest* is divided into Acts and Scenes and has the most elaborate stage directions of all.

In 1709 Nicholas Rowe, dramatist and poet laureate, produced in six octavo volumes the first modern and critical edition of Shakespeare's plays. Using the Fourth Folio as the basis of his text, he modernised the spelling, punctuation, and grammar, completed the lists of *dramatis personæ* and the division into acts and scenes, indicated the entrances and exits of the characters, and in some plays the location of the scenes. He prefixed the first formal life of Shakespeare, embodying traditions and anecdotes which might otherwise have perished. In addition he made more emendations of the text than anybody save the editors of the Second Folio.

Pope was Shakespeare's second editor, completing his edition in six Quarto volumes in 1725, the poems appearing in a seventh volume edited by Dr. George Sewell. Though Pope claimed to have collated the text of the Fourth Folio with that of the earlier Folios and Quartos, he based his text on that of Rowe, and carried still further the division and location of scenes. But he made arbitrary corrections, relegating

some passages to the margin and rejecting altogether lines that offended his taste.

In 1726 Lewis Theobald, the most inspired of Shakespeare's textual critics, attacked Pope in his *Shakespeare Restored, or a specimen of the many errors as well committed as unamended by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet.*[1] In this book occurs the most famous and brilliant of all the emendations of Shakespeare's text, Mistress Quickly's account of Falstaff's death in *Henry V*: for the Quarto and Folio readings, 'His nose was as sharp as a pen, and a table of green fields', he substituted 'a' babbled of green fields'. Theobald's edition of Shakespeare (1733) establishes him as the first great Shakespearean scholar, for though he used Rowe's text he brought to bear his considerable knowledge of Elizabethan literature and of Shakespeare's method, 'ever labouring', as he wrote to Warburton, 'to make the smallest deviation that I possibly can from the text; never to alter at all where I can by any means explain a passage with sense; nor ever by any emendation to make the author better when it is probable the text came from his own hands.' Theobald was the first to make a study of Shakespeare's sources and of his use of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and of North's *Plutarch*.

The fourth editor, and one of the worst, was Sir Thomas Hanmer, whose edition (1744) was based on Theobald's. He omitted a scene from *Henry V* as 'improper enough as it is all in French, and not intelligible to an English audience', and emended Cassio 'a fellow almost damned in a fair wife', to 'damned in a fair phyz'. It is only just to add, however, that some of his emendations were more successful; for instance, his substitution of 'lym' (bloodhound) for 'hym' in the line 'Hound or spaniel, brach or lym' in *King Lear*.

In 1747 appeared Bishop Warburton's edition based on that of Theobald, whom he ungratefully abuses in his preface and recklessly emends in his text. 'Surely', wrote Coleridge with reference to Warburton's alteration in *Twelfth Night* of Feste's 'conclusions to be as kisses' to 'conclusion to be asked is', 'surely Warburton could never have wooed by kisses and won, or he would never have flounder-flatted so just and humorous an image into so profound a nihility'.

Dr. Johnson's edition of 1765 is valuable mainly for its *Preface*, a piece of critical writing of the first importance, and for the short introductions to the various plays. He used Warburton's text, but his Shakespearean scholarship and reading were insufficient to lead to much textual criticism of real value.

Edward Capell and George Steevens inaugurated a new era in Shakespearean scholarship by recognising the importance of the

[1] Pope retaliated by making Theobald the hero of *The Dunciad*.

Quartos and studying them instead of relying mainly upon the Folios. Capell is said to have transcribed the whole of Shakespeare ten times, his important edition of the works appearing in 1768, but the results of his study of the Quartos and of the Elizabethan theatre were not published until after his death in his *Notes and Various Readings* and *The School of Shakespeare.*

In 1766 Steevens reprinted twenty of the Quartos and then added the results of his scholarship to Johnson's edition, which he reissued in 1773, and in a revised form in 1778. His knowledge of Elizabethan literature and history, and his illuminating quotations from Shakespeare's contemporaries, made this edition for a long time the standard version. Yet he excluded the *Poems* and *Sonnets* because 'the strongest Act of Parliament that could be passed would fail to compel readers into their service', and his later editions are marred by perverse and reckless alterations of the text, though enlivened by indecent notes, the authority for which he attributed to two innocent clergymen with whom he had quarrelled.

Edward Malone's *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written* (1778) is of first-rate importance. In addition, his researches among records and official papers in Stratford and London led to the discovery of much new information about Shakespeare's life; he made a study of the sources of the plays, of the history of the English stage, and in 1790 published his edition of Shakespeare, including the poems and the spurious plays of the Third Folio.

The First Variorum edition of Shakespeare, based on Steevens's work, was prepared and published by Isaac Reed in 1803; the Second Variorum of 1813 was merely a reprint of the First; the Third Variorum, in twenty-one volumes, based on Malone's edition and including the notes made by Malone before his death in 1812, was published in 1821 by James Boswell the younger, the son of Dr. Johnson's biographer.

In the eighteenth century Shakespearean research had been begun in almost every direction, but it had been the work of individuals; the nineteenth century was the age of organised and co-operative research. The first Shakespeare Society was founded in 1840 by J. P. Collier, and its members issued many important publications such as Collier's *Henslowe's Diary* and *Extracts from the Registers of the Stationers' Company.* In 1863-6 Clark, Glover, and Wright published the Cambridge Shakespeare, and their simultaneous and unannotated Globe edition is recognised as the nearest approach to a standard text.

The two giants of nineteenth-century research were F. J. Furnivall and J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps. After the dissolution of the old Shake-

speare Society on account of Collier's forgeries, Furnivall founded the New Shakespeare Society in 1872 and applied himself, and others, to the making of verse tests, the study of Shakespeare's background, the issue of a series of Quarto reprints and the *Transactions* of the Society. The indefatigable Halliwell-Phillipps accumulated an immense amount of material for the study of Shakespeare, his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (1887) containing in its thousand pages the result of his researches, including all the documents then known.

Furnivall had complained that 'no book by an Englishman exists which deals in any worthy manner with Shakespeare as a whole'. The German, Gervinus, had done this in his *Commentaries* of 1849, but England had to wait until 1875 for Edward Dowden's *Shakspere: His Mind and Art.* Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare* appeared in 1898, and in this century we have Sir Edmund Chambers's monumental *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems.*

Finally, there should be some mention of the progress made in a new field of research. As early as 1871 Richard Simpson suggested that part of the manuscript of the old play, *Sir Thomas More*, written about 1596, was in Shakespeare's handwriting: 'the way in which the letters are formed is absolutely the same as the way in which they are formed in the signatures of Shakespeare'. As a result of the work of Sir E. M. Thompson, Dr. A. W. Pollard and others, it now seems probable that 147 lines of this play are in Shakespeare's autograph. If this is so it follows that a knowledge of Shakespeare's handwriting and spelling will help in the discovery of what Shakespeare really wrote and be an invaluable aid to textual criticism. It is with this knowledge that Professor Dover Wilson is editing the New Shakespeare.

CHAPTER VII

DISINTEGRATORS AND BACONIANS

IN 1687 Edward Ravenscroft wrote an *Address* to his *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia*, in which he admitted that his play was partly an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, and added:

> I have been told by some anciently conversant with the Stage, thaf it was not Originally his [Shakespeare's], but brought by a private Authot to be Acted, and he only gave some Master-touches to one or two or the Principal Parts or Characters; this I am apt to believe, because 'tis the most incorrect and indigested piece in all his Works; It seems rather a heap of Rubbish than a Structure.

Some eighty years later Johnson wrote:

> The three parts of *Henry VI.* are suspected, by Mr. Theobald, of being suppositious, and are declared, by Dr. Warburton, to be certainly not Shakespeare's. Mr. Theobald's suspicion arises from some obsolete words; but the phraseology is like the rest of our author's style, and single words, of which, however, I do not observe more than two, can conclude little.
>
> Dr. Warburton gives no reason, but I suppose him to judge upon deeper principles and more comprehensive views, and to draw his opinion from the general effect and spirit of the composition, which he thinks inferior to the other historical plays.

Johnson, however, could not agree with Theobald and Warburton:

> From mere inferiority nothing can be inferred; in the productions of wit there will be inequality. Sometimes judgment will err, and sometimes the matter itself will defeat the artist. Of every author's works one will be the best and one will be the worst. . . . Dissimilitude of style, and heterogeneousness of sentiment, may sufficiently show that a work does not really belong to the reputed author. But in these plays no such marks of spuriousness are found. The diction, the versification, and the figures, are Shakespeare's.

But Coleridge did agree. After quoting the first seven lines of the opening speech of 1 *Henry VI* (see p. 141) he adds:

> If you do not feel the impossibility of the latter having been written by Shakspeare, all I dare suggest is, that you may have ears,—for so has another animal,—but an ear you cannot have, *me judice*.

And because he was revolted by the 'disgusting passage of the Porter' in *Macbeth* he rejected it:

> This low soliloquy of the Porter and his few speeches afterwards, I believe to have been written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakspeare's consent; and that finding it take, he with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words—'I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire'. Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present being of Shakspeare.[1]

In 1833 William Spalding published his *Letter on Shakespeare's Authorship of the Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which he maintained that:

> the whole of the first act may be safely pronounced to be Shakespeare's. . . . In the second act no part seems to have been taken by Shakespeare. . . . Nothing in the third act can with confidence be attributed to Shakespeare, except the first scene. . . . The fourth act may safely be pronounced wholly Fletcher's. . . . In the fifth act we again feel the presence of the master of the spell. Several passages in this portion are marked by as striking tokens of his art as any thing which we read in *Macbeth* or *Coriolanus*.

Then in 1850 James Spedding, having overheard a casual remark of Tennyson that 'many passages in Henry VIII were very much in the manner of Fletcher', asked *Who wrote Henry VIII?* and, basing his opinion on a study of the verse, assigned to Shakespeare only some seven scenes and attributed the rest to Fletcher. The probability that Shakespeare collaborated with Fletcher in *Henry VIII* is strengthened by the fact that the title-page of the Quarto of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* gives the authors as Fletcher and Shakespeare, as do the entries in the Stationers' Register both of this play and of the lost *Cardenio*.

Then again, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*, both plays of Shakespeare's maturity, are remarkably uneven; the first two acts of *Pericles* are manifestly inferior to the last three; and *Timon of Athens* is scarcely a play at all. And what are we to make of the Hecate speeches in *Macbeth*, of the Fool's 'prophecy' in *King Lear*, and of the vision and 'ludicrous scroll' in *Cymbeline*?

[1] 'That is to say, Coleridge does not like the Porter's speech, so he denies it to Shakespeare. But one sentence in it is too good to lose, so Shakespeare must be at hand to write it. This is the very ecstasy of criticism.'—*Sir Walter Raleigh*.

Doubts as to the authenticity of some of the plays, or at least of parts of them, were then expressed even by the first Shakespearean scholars of the early eighteenth century; nineteenth-century scholarship added more, but it remained for the twentieth century to turn doubt into disintegration: to find in almost every play evidence of adaptation, collaboration, revision, and abridgment, and to maintain that 'the great majority of the plays are simply not of Shakespeare's drafting'. For example, the disintegrators hold that Marlowe is mainly responsible for *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry V*, and *Julius Cæsar*; but they do not always agree, and in *Julius Cæsar* some recognise the hands not only of Shakespeare and Marlowe, but those of Chapman, Jonson, Beaumont, and Drayton as well.

The disintegration of the Shakespearean canon (the thirty-six plays of the First Folio) has been conducted in two ways. One method is by the discrimination of styles: if we can so easily detect the language and rhythms of Fletcher in *Henry VIII*, may we not also detect them, and those of other dramatists as well, in some of the other plays? J. M. Robertson is the leader of this school, finding in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare's 'first, and indeed only complete work'. This, of course, does not mean that Shakespeare was not primarily responsible for the plays attributed to him, but that there are very few in which there is not evidence of other men's work, whether of predecessors, contemporaries, or successors, in the form of adaptation, collaboration, or revision.

Others arrive at similar, though by no means always the same, conclusions by the bibliographical approach, that is by the careful study of the original texts, their discrepancies, stage-directions, speech-endings, spelling, punctuation, and so on. Of the fourteen comedies Professor Dover Wilson finds only four that are solely Shakespeare's work; in the others there are traces of antecedents and collaborators, and nearly always of abridgment and revision, and even in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which according to Robertson is Shakespeare's 'only complete work', he distinguishes three layers of composition and revision.

But there are much more elaborate and violent reconstructions than this, which is after all only Shakespeare's revision of his own work. Thus Wilson suggests that *Measure for Measure* was originally an old play merely revised by Shakespeare, that it was abridged by a 'second-rate collaborator' for performance in 1604, and then for a later production expanded by some unknown hand from this version into the text as we know it. For Robertson the play is 'a working recast by Shakespeare of a play drafted by Chapman on the basis of the older play of Whetstone, or perhaps of an earlier condensation of that two-

part drama into a single one'. Then again, according to Robertson, *Henry V* was originally written by Marlowe, probably with the assistance of Peele and Greene; revised probably by Peele, or perhaps by Chettle, Munday, Heywood, Dekker, or Drayton; Chapman added some comedy, and the play was finally revised by Shakespeare and possibly Chettle.

Modern Shakespearean critics are able to work with much greater precision than their predecessors owing to the recent discoveries that the 'good' Quarto editions of the plays and many of the Folio texts were printed from theatrical prompt-copy often in Shakespeare's autograph; that the odd punctuation of the Quartos and Folio was deliberate, and a guide to the speaking of the lines; and that in the manuscript play of *Sir Thomas More* we have three pages of Shakespeare's writing, or at any rate of a hand similar to that of Shakespeare.

> In short we believe that we know how Shakespeare wrote; we have a definite clue to his system of punctuation; we feel confident that often nothing but a compositor stands between us and the original manuscript; we can at times even creep into the compositor's skin and catch glimpses of the manuscript through his eyes. The door of Shakespeare's workshop stands ajar.[1]

With such instruments the disintegration of the canon and the theoretical reconstruction of the way in which the plays were composed is fascinating work—and a fascinating pastime—but not without danger, for once we abandon the authority of the Folio 'we have lost our only safe anchorage, and are afloat upon a wild and violent sea, subject to every wind of doctrine'. No doubt the composition of the plays is more complex, and their material less homogeneous than was once assumed, but to see evidence of adaptation when Shakespeare was careless or in a hurry, and of collaboration when he was bored, to deduce from every inconsistency some elaborate theory of revision or abridgment, is at the best over-enthusiasm, at the worst the dangerous abuse of criticism. This is an over-statement of the case and not a belittlement of the immensely valuable work of modern Shakespearean scholars, who do not in fact draw hasty conclusions or abandon the authority of the Folio, but only dispute the claim of Heminge and Condell that the plays are 'absolute in their numbers, as Shakespeare conceived them'. This we all do, for we are all disintegrators up to a point: there are certain passages that we know cannot have been written by Shakespeare; it is only a question of degree, but the new weapons of scholarship are two-edged, and in the

[1] I. Dover Wilson: *Textual Introduction to The New Shakespeare.*

hands of the unskilful might lead eventually to the cynical and complete decomposition of the canon.

The main evidence in favour of Shakespeare's authorship of the plays is their inclusion in the First Folio by Heminge and Condell, Shakespeare's friends and fellow-actors, who must have known as well as anybody exactly what he wrote; and in their Prefaces to the Folio they are at pains to make clear how seriously they took their task. In their dedication to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery they wrote:

> It hath bin the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the present worthy of your H.H. by the perfection . . . we most humbly consecrate to your H.H. these remaines of your seruant *Shakespeare;* that what delight is in them, may be ever your L.L. the reputation his, & the faults ours, if any be committed, by a payre so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the liuing, and the dead.

And more breezily in the epistle *To the great Variety of Readers*:

> It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them.

Admittedly seventeenth-century standards of editorship were not as high as they are to-day, but great weight must be given to their testimony: 'the height of our care . . . by the perfection . . . these remaines of your seruant *Shakespeare* . . . a payre so carefull . . . His owne writings . . . perfect of their limbes . . . as he conceiued them'.

There are thirty-six plays in the Folio. Of these, three were entered in the Stationers' Register as being by Shakespeare before their publication as Quartos, and sixteen of the eighteen that were not published as Quartos were registered as Shakespeare's in the composite entry of Blount and Jaggard in 1623 before the publication of the Folio. Of the eighteen plays published as Quartos, fifteen have Shakespeare's name on the title-page. Then in 1598 Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* named twelve plays as being by Shakespeare, including *Loue labours wonne*, which very probably refers to *The*

Taming of the Shrew. In addition, before the publication of the Folio, Jonson, Weever, Harvey, and the anonymous author of *Parnassus* mention certain plays as Shakespeare's, and the Revels Account for 1604-5 names 'Shaxberd' as the author of *Mesur for Mesur*, *The plaie of Errors*, and the *Martchant of Venis*. The evidence can perhaps best be appreciated in the form of a table, 'S.R.' meaning the first attribution of the play to Shakespeare in the Stationers' Register, 'Q.' in a Quarto, and 'M.' mentioned by Meres.

	S.R.	Q.	Meres.	Other References.
2 Hen. VI.		Q3. 1619		
3 Hen. VI.		Q3. 1619		
1 Hen. VI	1623			
Rich. III		Q2. 1598	M.	*Parnassus*, 1601
T. Andron.			M.	
C. of Err.	1623		M.	Revels Account, 1604-5
2 Gent.	1623		M.	
L. L. Lost		Q1. 1598	M.	
R. & Juliet			M.	Weever, 1599
Rich. II		Q2. 1598	M.	Weever, 1599
T. of Shrew			M?	
M. N. Dream		Q1. 1600	M.	
King John			M.	
M. of Venice		Q1. 1600	M.	Revels Account, 1604-5
1 Hen. IV		Q2. 1599	M.	
2 Hen. IV	1600	Q. 1600	M?	
Merry Wives		Q1. 1602		
Henry V				
Much Ado	1600	Q. 1600		
As Y. L. It	1623			
Tw. Night	1623			
J. Cæsar	1623			Jonson, 1623-37
Hamlet		Q1. 1603		Harvey, 1601
T. & Cressida		Q. 1609		
All's Well	1623			
M. for Measure	1623			Revels Account, 1604-5
Othello		Q1. 1622		
Timon	1623			
Lear	1607	Q1. 1608		
Macbeth	1623			
A. & Cleopatra	1623			
Coriolanus	1623			
Cymbeline	1623			
W's. Tale	1623			Jonson, 1619
Tempest	1623			
Henry VIII	1623			

If we assume that *Loue labours wonne* is *The Taming of the Shrew* it will be seen that Meres mentions all Shakespeare's plays written by the summer of 1598, with the exception of the three parts of *Henry VI.* The two plays not entered by Blount and Jaggard in the Stationers' Register in 1623 are *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King John*, presumably because they were confused with the earlier source-plays *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, which had been entered and published many years before. The three plays published as Quartos but without Shakespeare's name are *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Henry V*, and of these *Henry V* is the only one of the canon without external evidence of Shakespeare's authorship other than that of its inclusion in the Folio. On the other hand, the only external evidence against his authorship of any one of the plays is Ravenscroft's reference to *Titus Andronicus* quoted at the beginning of this chapter. All argument, therefore, against the authority of the Folio must be based on internal evidence, on the plays themselves.

At the same time it should be remembered that three of the plays added to the Third Folio in 1664, *Locrine*, *Cromwell*, and *The Puritan*, were originally published as being written by W.S., the other four, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The London Prodigal*, and *Pericles*, being openly ascribed to Shakespeare, and the 1611 Quarto of *The Troublesome Reign* named W. Sh. as the author, that of 1622 W. Shakespeare. All these, except for the last three acts of *Pericles*, are generally admitted to be apocryphal, partly on the external evidence that they were not included in the First Folio, but mainly on the internal evidence that they are un-Shakespearean. The mere fact of publication with Shakespeare's name, then, is no guarantee of authenticity, but inclusion in the First Folio almost certainly is, just as exclusion almost certainly is a guarantee of spuriousness. But not quite. *Pericles* was excluded by Heminge and Condell and *Henry VIII* included, although it seems probable that there is more of Shakespeare in the former than in the latter.

The external evidence in favour of Shakespeare's authorship of the plays in the First Folio is so strong that the internal evidence against any play or part of a play should be overwhelming before it is accepted, for, as Sir Walter Raleigh wrote:

> No critical ear, however highly respected, can safely set itself up against the evidence of Shakespeare's friends. It is wiser to believe that the plays in the Folio were attributed to Shakespeare either because they were wholly his, or because they were recast and rewritten by him, or,

lastly, because they contain enough of his work to warrant the attribution.[1]

It is, as was said above, a question of degree; most of the plays are wholly Shakespeare's, and though some contain the work of other men, 'they contain enough of his work to warrant the attribution' to Shakespeare. But sometimes the disintegrators allow precious little; according to Robertson, for instance, *Richard III* is primarily Marlowe's, and Shakespeare, 'however much he may have revised, contributes only some six or seven speeches, some of them very short'; and *Richard II*, too, is substantially Marlowe's, with some adaptation by Shakespeare. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote forty years ago, before the days of large-scale disintegration, but even then there was 'a wide margin for conjecture, and the case would be desperate were it not for one significant consolation. None of the plays which have been shown to belong to the middle period of Shakespeare's career, including his maturer histories and comedies, and most of the great tragedies, has ever been challenged.' Yet no plays have been more violently assailed in recent years than *Henry V* and *Julius Cæsar*.

The probability that Shakespeare sometimes partly rewrote his own work will at once be admitted, and there is evidence that there may have been other versions of *All's Well*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and even of *Much Ado*, but that a great creative artist should make a practice of this is improbable. However, an author's revision of his own work still remains his own. But it is another matter when it is assumed that Shakespeare was in the habit of adapting other men's plays—not 'recasting and rewriting', that is, treating them as sources as he treated Holinshed, Plutarch, and Bandello, but merely adapting, revising, adding 'some Master-touches to one or two of the Principal Parts or Characters'. No doubt the first plays attributed to him, *Henry VI* and *Titus Andronicus*, are partly adaptations, but again, such a pedestrian and spiritually unsatisfying mode of composition is almost inconceivable in one with the creative energy of Shakespeare. Nor is there any evidence save Ravenscroft's that he ever did adapt other men's work, and none that he made a practice of it. On the contrary, when he made use of an old play it was as a source: *King John* incorporates one line of *The Troublesome Reign*, and *King Leir and his Three Daughters* is completely refashioned in *King Lear*. That there were hack writers who revised and adapted other men's work is true, but that Shakespeare was one of them is, to say the least, improbable.

Collaboration was a common practice among the Elizabethan and

[1] *Shakespeare*, p. 108.

Jacobean dramatists, and towards the end of his career there is external evidence that Shakespeare collaborated with Fletcher in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Cardenio*, internal evidence of collaboration in *Henry VIII*, and both internal and the external evidence of exclusion from the First Folio of collaboration in *Pericles*. Possibly there was some collaboration in his early plays, in *The Taming of the Shrew* for example, but apart from this and the plays already mentioned there is no obvious indication of more than one hand at work.

The most palpably un-Shakespearean passages in the canon are those that have been added later by other men: the simpering Hecate in *Macbeth*, the Fool's prophetic jingle in *King Lear*, the vision and the 'ludicrous scroll' in *Cymbeline* perhaps being the most obvious. But in addition, as the first printed texts were often set up from theatrical prompt copies, patches of gagging, foolery, and 'business' were almost inevitably tacked on to many of the plays, particularly to those that were not published until 1623. Again, the first half of the seventeenth century was the age of the masque, and any excuse for a spectacular interlude, as in *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline*, would eagerly be seized upon by producers and incorporated in the book-keeper's prompt copy, sometimes perhaps at the expense of the text, which might be cut to make time for the elaboration.

It would be foolish to maintain that every word of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio was written by Shakespeare, or even that every word in any one play is his; that would be to defend the untenable position of the literary reactionary or fundamentalist. In the early plays there are occasional outcrops of his predecessors' work, in some of the later plays there is undoubted collaboration with his contemporaries, and all of them are liable to have gathered accretions in the course of successive productions. There are certain passages in the plays that are so obviously un-Shakespearean that all critics will agree, but when one critic detects the hand of Marlowe, another that of Greene or maybe of Peele, and yet another that of Chapman, it is safest to assume that the passage was after all, as Heminge and Condell would have us believe, written by Shakespeare.

Disintegration must not be confused with dissolution. There is, of course, no connection between the disintegrators and the Baconians; the first are serious critics like J. M. Robertson—incidentally the author of a book confuting the Baconian heresy—who claim that they can trace the work of other men in the plays; the others demolish Shakespeare altogether by denying that he had anything to do with the plays at all.

The first suggestion that Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's plays seems to have been made by Herbert Lawrence in 1769, but

it was only after the publication of J. C. Hart's *The Romance of Yachting* (1848) and *Who wrote Shakespeare?* (1852), followed by W. H. Smith's *Bacon and Shakespeare* (1856), that the Baconian theory began to take shape and to attract its fanatical supporters. Since then hundreds of books and articles have been published on the subject. But of recent years there have been heresies in the anti-Stratfordian ranks, some preferring as the author of the plays Roger Manners the 15th Earl of Rutland, others William Stanley the 6th Earl of Derby, and others again Edward de Vere the 17th Earl of Oxford. Bacon, however, still remains the favourite claimant, but supporters of all four noble lords are agreed in being anti-Stratfordians and maintaining that whoever wrote the plays it certainly was not William Shakespeare.

This negative attitude was originally a natural reaction to the hyperbolical claims put forward by the over-enthusiastic Stratfordians of last century, that not only was Shakespeare the world's greatest poet and dramatist but the greatest scholar and philosopher of his time: his knowledge of the law was so great that he must have been a lawyer, of Courts that he must have been a courtier, of the classics that he must have been a profound scholar. Such claims of course are silly; Jonson and Chapman, neither of whom was a lawyer, display as wide and deep a knowledge of legal phraseology as Shakespeare; Marlowe and Jonson certainly had more scholarship, and almost any of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists was as much at home in Court life as Shakespeare, though he had the advantage of being one of the King's Men and taking part in many performances at Court. There is little evidence of any great profundity of knowledge; he probably knew more about natural history than about law, and about gardens than mythology; it is the breadth of his knowledge and of his sympathy that is so remarkable.

One of the best known, or at any rate most often met with, pro-Baconian books appears to be *Bacon is Shakespeare*, by Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, Bt., published in 1910. It is possible that some Baconians are unable to accept all the rarer proofs of Bacon's authorship, but the book displays such a simple faith and lack of affectation and laboured art that it can scarcely fail to attract the reader. Perhaps as good a way as any of giving an idea of the Baconian thesis is by summarising this book, though it is not always easy to follow the elusive argument.

The author begins disarmingly by agreeing whole-heartedly with the Stratfordians that 'the mighty author of the immortal plays was gifted with the most brilliant genius ever conferred upon man': classical scholars are amazed at his prodigious knowledge of classical

lore; one of the greatest students of law 'was not ashamed to confess that he had not sufficient legal knowledge or mental capacity to enable him to fully comprehend a quarter of the law contained in the plays'. It is true that at a dark period for English literature certain critics denied the possibility of Bohemia's being accurately described as by the sea, but now that we know better we must admit that it is only men of small learning, knowing very little of classics and still less of geography and the law, who fail to appreciate the vast store of learning exhibited in the plays.

Having established the fact that the dramatist was a 'universal genius', the baronet turns sharply on the Stratfordians and asks them if the provincial grammar-school boy could conceivably have become such a man. Lord Palmerston, Lord Houghton, John Bright, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Greenleaf Whittier, Dr. W. H. Furness, Mark Twain, and Prince Bismarck apparently had their doubts; even 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the eminent British critic and poet, although he assumed that Shakespeare was the author of the Plays, rejected the facts of his life and character, and says: "Ask your own hearts, ask your own common sense, to conceive the possibility of the author of the Plays being the anomalous, the wild, the irregular genius of our daily criticism. What! are we to have miracles in sport? Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?" ' This is perhaps a little unfair, for to the ordinary reader Coleridge seems to be trying to prove that Shakespeare, the author of the plays, was not a wild irregular genius, but a great poet whose judgment 'was not less deserving our wonder than his genius'.

But after all, what do we know of Shakespeare's life? Certainly not the legends contained in Sir Sidney Lee's 'romance which he calls the "Life" of Shakespeare'. The truth is that we know practically nothing about Shakespeare, and what we do know is for the most part discreditable. He was born at Stratford of illiterate parents (we do *not* know that he went to school there); apparently he tried to desert Anne Hathaway whom he had seduced, and soon after marriage did desert her and her three children; he became an actor in London, bought a house in Stratford, and engaged in purchases and sales and law-suits which indicate his mercenary and litigious nature; he obtained a grant of arms by false pretences, promoted the enclosure of common lands at Stratford after being guaranteed against personal loss, and died without a book in his possession, leaving his wife, as an after-thought, his second-best bed. There are no records of friendship with anyone more cultivated than his fellow-actors; no letters; and no references to his death before the First Folio in 1623.

That the Stratford actor could not even write is suggested by the

fact that he did not even sign his will, the three signatures of which were written by the solicitor who drew it up—a fact which is conclusively proved in an article by Magdalene Thumm-Kintzel in a Leipzig magazine. And of course if he could not sign his own will he could not have written the two other so-called signatures to the deed of purchase and the mortgage of the house in Blackfriars. There is therefore 'a possibility, practically amounting to a certainty, that the Stratford actor could not so much as manage to scrawl his own name'. And if he could not write his name how could he have written the plays? 'As a matter of fact, not a single scrap of evidence, contemporary or otherwise, exists to show that Shakspere, the householder of Stratford-on-Avon, wrote the plays or anything else.'

That Shakespeare really was an illiterate boor is proved by contemporary references, veiled, it is true, but clear enough to leave no doubts in any unprejudiced mind. There is, for instance, an allusion in Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour* which was acted in 1599, the very year of Shakespeare's grant of arms. In this play Sogliardo, 'an essential clown' who obtains a grant of arms with the motto *Not Without Mustard*, is clearly Shakespeare, while Puntarvolo, whose crest is a *Boar*, 'must be intended to represent Bacon' (though it is perhaps not quite so transparent why Jonson in his notes on the characters should call him 'a vain-glorious knight' subject to public derision). Again in the tract, *Ratsei's Ghost*, Ratsei the robber ironically advises an ambitious and mercenary country player, who must be Shakespeare, to buy 'some place of lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy mony may there bring thee to dignitie and reputation; then thou needest care for no man, nor not for them that before made thee prowd with speaking their words upon the stage'. *The Return from Parnassus*, too, has an obvious allusion to the ungrateful and grasping Stratfordian as one of 'those glorious vagabonds' who 'With mouthing words that better wits have framed, They purchase lands, and now Esquiers are made'. But the most conclusive proof of Shakespeare's illiteracy comes in *As You Like It*, for once we have realised that Touchstone is really Bacon (disguised this time as a clown), and that Awdrey is the plays ascribed to Shakespeare—Touchstone of course being unwilling to be married to Awdrey by a *Mar-Text*—it is easy to see that the rustic William is, without any attempt at disguise, the clownish William Shakespeare of Stratford himself. For William was born in the Forest of Arden; he says 'Thank God', as he did in the character of Sogliardo; he is rich, but only rich for a clown; he says he has a pretty wit, 'a phrase we must remember that is constantly used in reference to the Stratford actor. Touchstone mocks him with a paraphrase of the well-known

maxim, "If you are wise you are a Foole, if you be a Foole you are wise", which is to be found in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*. Then he asks him "*Art thou learned?*" and William replies "*No sir.*" This means, *unquestionably*, as every lawyer must know, that William replies that he cannot *read* one line of print.'

After this can we any longer doubt that the writer 'has convincingly proved that this child of illiterate parents' was incapable of writing his own name, let alone of writing the most wonderful plays of all time? And that this man 'never wrote the plays . . . is just what everybody else is saying at Eton, at Oxford, at Cambridge, in the Navy, in the Army, and pretty generally among unprejudiced people everywhere'. When therefore we are invited to look at the 'so-called portrait' of Shakespeare drawn by Martin Droeshout for the First Folio of 1623, we are not surprised when it turns out to be 'a cunningly drawn cryptographic picture, shewing two left arms and a mask'. Ben Jonson's verses on the page opposite the portrait make this quite clear:

To the Reader.
This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Grauer had a strife
With Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but haue drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that vvas euer vvrit in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.
B. I.

Simply by transposing *out-doo* in line 4 we get *doo-out*, or *conceal*—that is, 'shut out the real face of the living man'; and if we read *hid* for *hit* in line 6 it is clear that 'the real author is writing left-handedly, that means secretly, in shadow, with his face hidden behind a mask or pseudonym'.

Leonard Digges's lines in the Folio, *To the Memory of W. Shakespeare*, confirm this. When he wrote 'When Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment', of course he meant 'When Time dissolves thy Stratford Mask'. The original monument was like the one illustrated in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), where the figure 'hugs a sack of wool, or a pocket of hops to its belly and does not hold a pen in its hand', plainly showing that the Stratford actor had no connection with literature, and everybody in Stratford must have

known that he could not write so much as his own name. The present monument *with the large pen in the right hand* representing a literary man was substituted for the old effigy about 1740. 'Of course, the false bust in the existing monument was substituted for the old bust for the purpose of fraudulently supporting the Stratford myth.'

But this is not all. With the headline 'To the Reader' and the signature 'B.I.' there are twelve lines in Jonson's verses and, if the two v.v.'s in line 9 be counted as four letters, there are 287 letters. This number 287 is important, but here it is sufficient to say that we are 'informed' that the 'Great Author' intended to reveal himself 287 years after 1623, the date of the First Folio, that is in 1910, the very year in which Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence published his book.

Shakespeare having been so satisfactorily disposed of as, in the words of *Every Man out of His Humour*, 'a swine without a head, without brain, wit, anything indeed', it only remains to find a suitable author for the plays. For this distinction there can be only one serious candidate, the universal genius who in the days of Queen Elizabeth for the first time appeared in human history, the marvel and mystery of the age, Francis Bacon. For, as the plays were written by a universal genius, as there had only once in the history of the world been such a phenomenon, as that phenomenon was Bacon, then Bacon must have written the plays. The argument is flawless; there is no escaping that inexorable logic. Nor is it any more difficult to prove from the plays themselves that Bacon wrote them than it was to prove that Shakespeare did not write them. Since, however, Bacon's verse, a translation of a few of the *Psalms*, scarcely strengthens the Baconian case, it is first necessary to establish the fact that Bacon was a poet. Fortunately there is plenty of evidence of this.

In 1645 was published anonymously *The Great Assises holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his Assessours*, in which Bacon is designated Chancellor of Parnassus, which of course means 'greatest of poets'. In one column are printed the names of the twelve Jurors, all poets (except Shakespeare), and in a parallel column is a list of the Malefactors. 'A little examination will teach us that the jurors are really the same persons as the malefactors and that we ought to read right across the page as if the dividing line did not exist.' This being so, Shakespeare is the malefactor described as 'the writer of weekly accounts. This exactly describes him, for the only literature for which he was responsible was the accounts sent out by his clerk or attorney.' But the most valuable testimony is that of Ben Jonson,[1] who in his

[1] Ben Jonson was in the secret. He himself was one of Bacon's left hands, as we can see from his bust in Westminster Abbey, which wears a left-handed coat.

Discoveries says of Bacon that he 'hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue, which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece, or haughty Rome'. 'He who hath filled up all numbers' means unquestionably 'He that hath written every kind of poetry'. After this contemporary evidence the author finds it difficult to understand how anyone can venture to dispute Bacon's position as pre-eminent in poetry, but lest there is anybody who is still troubled by lingering loyalties to Stratford he has only to read *The Defence of Poetry*, where Shelley roundly declares 'Bacon was a poet'—in a passage that makes the same claim for Plato and Cicero.

It will probably be admitted that the weakest part of the Baconian thesis is the explanation of why it was necessary for Bacon to conceal his identity by writing under assumed names. Sir Edwin maintains quite simply that it would have been dangerous to write under his own name, and cites the case of Chapman, Marston, and Jonson who were imprisoned for writing *Eastward Hoe*, and the wrath of Elizabeth at the deposition scene in *Richard II*. This does not seem an entirely convincing explanation as, apart from *Richard II*, the plays appear to be innocuous enough; but doubtless Bacon had weighty reasons unknown to us for going to such trouble to conceal his identity and at the same time to make sure that his authorship should be revealed after his death. But even then it is a little puzzling why he should have allowed such a large margin of safety as the year 1910 for the revelation, when he could scarcely have expected to have lived longer than 1660, when he would have been a hundred.

The author is on surer ground again when it comes to the fascinating business of explaining how Bacon reveals himself in the plays and poems. After an almost casual and tantalisingly brief reference to *As You Like It*—'which of course means "Wisdom from the Mouth of a fool" '—in which he shows that Bacon was Jaques as well as Touchstone, he turns to the *Sonnets*, number 81 being particularly revealing. 'Perhaps', he says, truly enough, 'the reader will better understand Sonnet 81 if I insert the words necessary to fully explain it.'

> Or I [Bacon] shall live your epitaph to make,
> Or you [Shakespeare] survive when I in earth am rotten;
> From hence your memory death cannot take,
> Although in me each part will be forgotten.
> Your name [Shakespeare] from hence immortal life shall have,
> Though I [Bacon], once gone, to all the world must die:
> The earth can yield me but a common grave,
> When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
> Your monument shall be my [not your] gentle verse,
> Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,

And tongues to be your being [which as an author was not] shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You [Shakespeare] still shall live, such virtue hath my pen [not your own pen, for you never wrote a line],
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

Small wonder that after the writer had learned the true meaning of Sonnet 81 his eyes were opened to the inward meaning of other Sonnets; number 76, for instance, repeats the same tale:

Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed?

and we are asked to remark especially the phrase 'in a noted weed', which means in a 'pseudonym'.

The Tempest was written purposely to afford a clue to his identity. Bacon, of course, is Prospero—each had a brother Anthony—and Shakespeare is the drunken Stephano—Shakespeare died from the effects of a drunken bout. 'The falsely crowned and gilded king of the Island who had stolen the wine (the poetry) "where should they find this grand liquor that hath gilded them" and whose name is Stephanos (Greek for crown) throws off at the close of the play, his false crown while Caliban says "What a thrice double ass was I to take this drunkard for a God." '

It is, however, to *Love's Labour's Lost* that we must look for irrefutable evidence that Bacon is Shakespeare. The Quarto (1598) of *Love's Labour's Lost* is obviously of the highest importance as it is the first play to be published with the name of Shakespeare on the title-page. As soon, therefore, as Bacon had attached his pseudonym to the play, he wrote, or 'caused to be issued a book attributed to Francis Meres which is called "Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury" ', which distinctly told the world that eleven other plays had been written, though published anonymously, by the same author. And to make sure that posterity should be in no doubt as to his authorship of *Love's Labour's Lost* and the preceding plays Bacon had been careful to insert in the Quarto the all-revealing clue. This is the word honorificabilitudinitatibus, from whose twenty-seven letters can be formed the Latin hexameter, 'Hi ludi F. Baconis nati tuiti orbi', meaning, 'These plays, F. Bacon's offspring, are preserved for the world'.

This explanation of the real meaning to be derived from the long word honorificabilitudinitatibus seems to be so convincing as scarcely

to require further proof; but the clue did not entirely satisfy Bacon. 'He therefore so arranged the plays and the acts of the plays in the folio of 1623 that the long word should appear upon the 136th page, be the 151st word thereon, should fall on the 27th line, and that the interpretation should indicate the numbers 136 and 151, thus forming a mechanical proof so positive that it can neither be misconstrued nor explained away, a mechanical proof that provides an evidence which absolutely compels belief.' This meant some rearrangement of the lines of the text, for owing to a curious blunder in the printing of the Quarto the word appeared in the 25th line; but Bacon did not allow the mistake to happen twice, and we can well understand Sir Edwin's claim that the Folio is the most carefully edited and printed book in the world, for it meant that Bacon had so to arrange the preceding plays that the 136th page should begin with the first word of the revealing page of the Quarto.

The word honorificabilitudinitatibus, therefore, has a further significance: not only does it reveal Bacon's authorship of the plays, it also reveals where we are to find it—the 151st word (of course counting only those in ordinary type), on the 136th page of the Folio, though why the word itself should give the clue to its own whereabouts is not quite clear. Of course we can tell that the word is on the 27th line—that half of it is in fact on the 28th is unimportant—because there are 27 letters in the word. And the rest of the proof is equally simple. 'Bacon tells us that there are 24 letters in the alphabet (*i* and *j* being deemed to be forms of the same letter, as are also *u* and *v*). Bacon was himself accustomed frequently to use the letters of the alphabet as numerals. Thus A is 1, B is 2 . . . Y is 23, Z is 24. Let us take as an example Bacon's own name—B=2, a=1, c=3, o=14, n=13; all these added together make the number 33, a number about which it is possible to say a good deal.' In the same way, if we give each letter of the revealing word its numerical value, we find that the sum of the 27 numbers is 287. Now consider the revealing sentence formed from the same 27 letters, 'Hi ludi F. Baconis nati tuiti orbi', and it will be found that the total is the same. Not only this, the sum of the first and last letters of the words is 136, whi'e that of the intermediate letters is 151. Add 136 to 151 and the answer is 287, the identical value of the same 27 letters when arranged in the order of the word. This quite clearly tells us that the revealing word occurs on page 136 and is the 151st word—the italic words being of course omitted. After this most readers will agree that 'it is not possible to afford a clearer mechanical proof that the Shakespeare plays are Bacon's offspring.

It is not possible to make a clearer and more definite statement that Bacon is the author of the plays.'

And though 'it is not possible that any doubt can any longer be entertained respecting the manifest fact that Bacon is Shakespeare', there are other proofs for those who want them, for the whole of page 136 of the Folio is cryptographic. For instance, on line 33 we read 'What is Ab speld backward with the horn on his head?' The answer 'Ba, with a horne added', is evidently incorrect, and should of course have been in Latin. The Latin for horn being cornu, the real answer is '*Ba corn*-u fool'. This is the exact answer we should expect to find on line 33, for as we have seen, the number 33 indicates Bacon's name. But Francis Bacon had a brother Anthony, therefore a few lines further down the page we read, '*Quis, quis*, thou Consonant?' 'Quis, quis?' means 'Who, who?' or 'Which Bacon do you mean?' and it is equally clear from the ensuing dialogue that the answer to 'Quis, quis?' is the vowels a, e, i, o, u. Now, as a key to the Folio, Bacon wrote, or had a hand in the production of, a great Cryptographic book, *Cryptomenytices*, which was published in 1624 under the name of 'Gustavus Selenus, The Man in the Moon'. We know that the numerical value of Bacon's surname is 33;[1] if we wish to find his Christian name, therefore, we must deduct 33 from 287 and the answer should give us a clue. And sure enough, if we turn to page 254 in the great Cryptographic book we find a 'Square Table' which supplies the key to the meaning of the vowels a, e, i, o, u. The answer is as we should expect, Fra.—short for Francis. So that page 136 of the Folio reveals not only that F. Bacon wrote the plays, but more exactly that it was Fra. Bacon who was the author.

In case posterity should be too slow-witted to identify and interpret the clues that he scattered so lavishly on page 136 of the Folio, Bacon attracted its attention to other references by the simple device of printing ornaments and illustrations upside down. For example, in Camden's *Remains*, 1616 (in which we may be sure that Bacon had a hand), the head-ornament to the chapter on Surnames is inverted, and there, as was to be expected, is a reference—first, to the mysterious village of Bacon Creping, and a few pages later to 'such names as Shakespeare, Shotbolt, Wagstaffe'. The significance of these references will be appreciated if we examine one of the visual proofs of

[1] In a fascinating footnote Sir Edwin comments: 'The number 33 too obviously represented Bacon, and therefore 53 which spells sow (S 18, O 14, W 21=53) was substituted for 33. Scores of examples can be found where on page 53 some reference is made to Bacon in books published under various names. In many cases page 55 is *misprinted* as 53. In the Shakespeare Folio 1623 on the first page 53 we read "Hang Hog is latten for Bacon", and on the second page 53 we find "Gammon of Bacon". . . . A whole book could be filled with similar instances.'

Bacon's authorship, the illustrations on the title-page of the great Cryptographic book already referred to. There, to the left, is a man, 'evidently Bacon, giving his writing to a Spearman who is dressed in actor's boots. . . . This man is a Shake-Spear, nay he really is a correct portrait of the Stratford house-holder, which you will readily perceive if you turn to Dugdale's engraving of the Shakespeare bust. In the middle distance the man still holding a spear, still being a Shake-Spear, walks with a staff: he is therefore a Wagstaffe. On his back are books—the books of the plays. In the sky is seen an arrow, no, it is not sufficiently long for an arrow, it is a Shotbolt. This Shotbolt is near to a bird which seems about to give to it the scroll it carries in its beak. But is it a real bird? No, it has no real claws, its feet are Jove's lightnings, verily, "it is the Eagle of great verse".' In the right-hand picture the same man is seen 'riding on a courser. But he is no longer a Shake-spear, he is a Shake-*spur*', the spur being the one prominent thing in the whole picture. The illustration at the bottom of the page 'within the four square corners of fact' shows Bacon writing his book while an overdressed and masked Actor lifts a 'Cap of Maintenance' from the real writer's head. Finally, the engraving at the top represents a storm and beacon lights—but, 'no, it represents *The Tempest* of Shakespeare and tells you that the play is filled with Bacon lights'. In short, 'the whole title page clearly shows that it is drawn to give a revelation about Shakespeare, who might just as well have borne the name Shotbolt or of Wagstaffe or of Shakespur, see *The Tempest*:

> The strong bass'd promontorie
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluckt up.'

There are other revealing title-pages showing a spear and an actor wearing only one spur, not quite so informative as this one perhaps, but there is the 'specially revealing' title-page to the first volume of Bacon's collected works, printed abroad in Latin. Here Bacon is pointing with his right hand to his open book in full light, and with his left in shadow is pushing forward a figure holding a clasped book which by the cross lines on its side (the accepted symbol of a mirror) shows that it represents the mirror up to Nature, *i.e.* Shakespeare's plays. 'The reader will now be able to fully realise the revelation contained in Droeshout's masked figure with its two left arms,' reproduced in the First Folio.

And now at last after this accumulation of evidence the reader is also in a position to fully realise what exactly were the relations between Bacon and Shakespeare. A man in the exalted station of

Bacon could not afford to take the risk of publishing his poems and plays under his own name, so he adopted the pen-name of Shakespeare (which might just as well have been Shotbolt or Wagstaffe), under which he published *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. To safeguard himself he looked round for somebody on whom he might father his work, and found 'a grasping money-lending man, of little or no repute, that bore a name called Shaxpur, which might be twisted into Bacon's pen-name Shakespeare'. The relationship must have begun as early as 1594 when *The Taming of a Shrew* was printed, for of course the drunken tinker Christopher Sly is Shakespeare, and the Hostess is Bacon.[1] Matters were brought to a head in 1598 when Bacon published *Love's Labour's Lost* in the name of Shakespeare, issued Mere's *Palladis Tamia*, explaining that he was also the author of eleven other plays, and allowed the fourth reprint of the dangerous *Richard II* to bear his pseudonym. The actor Shakespeare had to be made secure.

An actor of repute would probably have refused even a large bribe; not so the Stratford man, who was prepared to allow his name to be put to the plays and to leave London for the obscurity of the provinces in return for a handsome house in Stratford (Bacon bought New Place for him in 1597), a grant of arms, and the gift 'so singular in its magnificence' of a thousand pounds, which, though attributed by Rowe to Southampton's generosity, must really have come from Bacon. And there at Stratford the boorish actor lived unhonoured of his fellows, battening on the bribes he received as the wonderful series of plays flowed from Bacon's pen, and on the ill-gotten proceeds of his local litigation, until he died from drink in 1616. Though Bacon survived another ten years he wrote no more plays.

'Men of great intelligence in other matters', concludes the author of this remarkable book, 'seem when the life of Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon is concerned, quite prepared to refuse to exercise either judgment or common sense, and to swallow without question any amount of preposterous nonsense.' How otherwise can they believe Rowe's statement that Shakespeare was a competent actor, and that 'the top of his performance was the Ghost of his own Hamlet'? The answer is of course that the part requires absolutely no histrionic ability, for no one sees who plays it, and no one knows or cares. But there must be some meaning behind this persistent fable. 'As usual, the Bacon key at once solves the riddle. The moment we realise that Bacon is Hamlet, we perceive that the purpose of the rumour is to

[1] The author seems to have made an error here. 'The Taming of *a* Shrew' was not Shakespeare's play, but one of the sources of 'The Taming of *the* Shrew,' published for the first time in the first Folio.

reveal to us the fact that the highest point to which the actor Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, attained was to play the part of Ghost to Bacon, that is to act as his "Pseudonym", or in other words, the object of the story is to reveal to us the fact that Bacon is Shakespeare.'[1]

[1] Logan Pearsall Smith in his *On Reading Shakespeare* remarks in a beautiful footnote, with which the present writer would like to associate himself: 'I do not wish, however, to speak with any disrespect of that view of the authorship of Shakespeare's plays which is so firmly held by officers in the Navy and the Army, by one of his Majesty's judges, and the manager of more than one large drapery establishment, and is corroborated by the authority of Mark Twain, Mrs. Henry Pott, Prince Bismarck, John Bright, the late Mr. Crump, K.C., and several thoughtful baronets'.

PART TWO

But when a poet is a great poet as Shakespeare is, we cannot judge of his greatness unaided; we need both the opinions of other poets, and the diverse views of critics who were not poets, in order to help us to understand.

T. S. Eliot.

CHAPTER VIII

SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICS

IT was almost exactly two hundred years after Shakespeare's death that Coleridge, in 1818, delivered his Lectures on Shakespeare. In the course of those two centuries, before Shakespearean criticism had become almost an international industry,[1] five great critics, each of whom may be said to have represented the educated opinion of his age, an opinion for whose education he was himself no doubt largely responsible, pronounced their judgements at fairly regular intervals of fifty years. Ben Jonson wrote his verses 'to the memory of my beloved, the author Mr. William Shakespeare', for the Folio of 1623; Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* was published in 1668; Pope's *Preface to Shakespeare's Works* appeared in 1725; Johnson's *Preface* in 1765; and Coleridge's *Lectures* were delivered in 1818. We have, therefore, a representative of Shakespeare's contemporaries, of the Restoration, of the Augustan Age, of the later Age of Reason, and of the Romantic Movement—and all were poets as well as critics, and some were dramatists as well—to explain to us the peculiar impact of Shakespeare on their own age.

When Shakespeare died there were no daily or even weekly newspapers to publish the fact and to supply an obituary, and even if there had been it is more than probable that the death in the provinces of a retired actor and writer of plays which could scarcely be considered as serious literature would have passed unnoticed. It remained for Heminge and Condell, Shakespeare's fellow-actors and friends, to collect and publish in one volume, the Folio of 1623, all Shakespeare's plays, and to recommend them to 'the great variety of *readers*', that is as literature to be studied, plays with a claim to something more than the ephemeral notoriety of a stage performance. 'Read him, therefore; and again, and again. And if then you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him.'

No doubt Heminge and Condell, being financially involved in the venture, were not entirely disinterested, and perhaps even the sturdily independent and forthright Ben Jonson was sufficiently prejudiced by his friendship and a possible payment for his services just a little to

[1] In Mr. Augustus Ralli's *History of Shakespearian Criticism*, 158 pages suffice for the period between the First Folio and Coleridge. The succeeding century, 1818-1925, needs almost 1,000 more.

suspend his critical faculties when he wrote his verses 'to his beloved the author and what he hath left us' and claimed that Shakespeare was not of an age, but for all time, that not only was he the wonder of our stage but, in spite of his small Latin and less Greek, was the equal of all that insolent Greece and haughty Rome sent forth. Certainly he was more severe when in his *Discoveries* he wrote, after protesting that he loved the man and honoured his memory this side idolatry, that 'his wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too'. He also told Drummond of Hawthornden that 'Shakespeare wanted art', and whatever he may have meant by that, through the criticism of the next two hundred years there runs, with varying degrees of emphasis, the theme that Shakespeare with his small Latin and less Greek was a wild and irregular genius for whose faults and excesses it was necessary to apologise, and whose plays needed polishing, refining, and trimming before they could be produced upon the stage. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that Schlegel and Coleridge independently refuted this nonsense and maintained that 'the judgment of Shakespeare is commensurate with his genius'. Ben Jonson and the rest of Shakespeare's contemporaries were inevitably too close to their subject to see it in perspective and correct focus, but there is no doubt that they recognised Shakespeare's genius, and they bore generous witness to his popularity, though until the end of the seventeenth century Shakespeare had to share the laurels with Beaumont and Fletcher.[1]

Dryden was sufficiently far removed in time to take a wider view of Shakespeare's works, but a view not yet obscured by the mists and fogs of former criticism; he was near enough to be in a simple and unperplexed relationship with his subject, not only through the text of the Folios but also through the stage performances of the King's and the Duke's companies, the former of which, composed of older men, must have carried into the Restoration theatre, with its innovations of scenery and women actors, much of the Shakespearean tradition. Dryden was a very great critic, and generous in his judgments: 'Shakespeare was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul.' For Dryden he was 'the divine Shakespeare, the father of our dramatic poets', and yet, as was only to be expected of one 'untaught, unpractis'd in a barbarous Age', he had his faults, and 'the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment'. It was the dramatist and the philosopher in Shakespeare that so captivated Dryden, and he was deaf to much of the poetry. Living 'in an age

[1] The Duchess of Newcastle had no doubts. See her remarkable panegyric on p. 277.

which is more refined'[1] he mistook sublimity for extravagance, vehemence for roaring madness, and sense for a sound of words; and he honestly believed that just as Chaucer was a rough diamond that must first be polished ere he shines,[2] so Shakespeare's characters would be improved by speaking the elegant language of the Restoration, his thoughts would be given their true lustre by adding somewhat of his own where his author was deficient, and a slight readjustment of the plays, the omission of a scene here to get rid of the barbarians, the addition of a character there—Caliban must have a sister and Ariel 'a gentle spirit for his love'—to improve the symmetry, was all in the true interests of Shakespeare who wanted words in the beginning of our language.

It may be as well here to digress for a moment and consider the *Poetics* of Aristotle and the Neo-Classicism based upon it, without a knowledge of which much of the criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is scarcely intelligible.

The *Poetics* is the incomplete notes of a student who attended a course of lectures given by Aristotle at Athens some time before his death in 322 B.C. It is a discourse 'of Poetry in itself and of its various kinds', but it treats most fully of Tragedy; and here it is important to remember that Aristotle's induction was inevitably based on Greek tragedy alone, the only model he had, and there is no reason to doubt that 'if he had seen ours he might have changed his mind'.

His famous definition of tragedy runs as follows:

> Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.[3]

He then goes on to elaborate his definition, the following points for our purpose being the most important:

[1] Lamb thought differently: 'Much has been said, and deservedly, in reprobation of the vile mixture which Dryden has thrown into the Tempest. Doubtless without some such vicious alloy, the impure ears of that age would never have sate out to hear so much innocence of love as is contained in the sweet courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda.'

[2] Compare Chaucer, 'The smyler with the knyf under the cloke', with Dryden's 'translation':

> Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer,
> Soft smiling, and demurely looking down,
> But hid the dagger underneath the gown.

[3] Trans. S. H. Butcher.

> The Plot is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy: Character holds the second place.
>
> Third in order is Thought.
>
> Fourth among the elements enumerated comes Diction.
>
> Of the remaining elements Song holds the chief place among the embellishments.
>
> The Spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry.

Having established these principles he goes on to discuss the proper structure of the Plot, 'since this is the first and most important thing in Tragedy':

> According to our definition, Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude. . . . And to define the matter roughly, we may say that the proper magnitude is comprised within such limits, that the sequence of events, according to the law of probability or necessity, will admit of a change from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad. . . . (This suggestion is Aristotle's only reference to the so-called 'Unity of Time'.)
>
> As therefore, in the other imitative arts, the imitation is one when the object imitated is one, so the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole. ('Unity of Action.')

After discussing the Simple and Complex Plot: the first when a change of fortune takes place without, the second with, Reversal of the Situation or Recognition or both, he turns to consider the Tragic Hero, 'a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty, and he must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous', and then he sums up the position as far as he has gone:

> A well constructed plot should, therefore, be single in its issue, rather than double as some maintain. The change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad. It should come about as the result not of vice, but of some great error or frailty, in a character either such as we have described, or better rather than worse.

The first thing to be noticed is his emphasis on the primary importance of the plot, and the subordinate position of character. Then

it will be observed that the only Unity that Aristotle insists on, if 'insist' be not too strong a word, is that of Action. By this 'rule' *King Lear* would be condemned for its double plot, and so presumably would *Hamlet* for its irrelevant comedy. All that he says with reference to the Unity of Time is to suggest that 'roughly' the time supposed to elapse in the play should allow of a change of fortune from good to bad: not too long and not too short, but of 'a proper magnitude'. Of the Unity of Place—that there should be no change of scene—he says nothing.

The *Poetics* was unknown in Europe during the Dark and Middle Ages, and was only rediscovered at the time of the Renaissance, about 1500, but it was not long before Italian scholars with their worship and imitation of 'the ancients' seized on it and transformed it into rules, much as, at the same period, Palladio reduced architecture to prescribed forms based on those of Vitruvius, and so stifled the living flame of the Renaissance. So we find Castelvetro writing in 1570—and this was the orthodox doctrine:

> But it is evident that, in tragedy and comedy, the plot contains one action only, or two that by their interdependence can be considered one . . . not because the fable itself is unsuited to contain more actions than one, but because the space of time, of twelve hours at most, in which the action is represented, and the strait limits of the place in which it is represented likewise, do not permit a multitude of actions.

Twelve hours at most! And the strait limits of the place! Wherever he got that, it was certainly not from Aristotle. And then it will be noticed that instead of emphasising Aristotle's one Unity—of Action—he makes it dependent on the newfangled Unities of Time and Place, the former of which Aristotle had scarcely mentioned, and the latter not at all.

In the seventeenth century this 'Neo-Classic' creed passed into France where Boileau, Rapin, and Le Bossu codified it into its most preposterously rigid form, the cult of Rules and Reason. 'Love Reason', wrote Boileau in *L'Art Poétique* in 1669. 'Too many, carried away by insensate excitement, fetch their thoughts far from plain sense: they would think themselves degraded if, in their monstrous verses, they gave a thought which another had given before them.' And Rapin:

> I make no pretence of justifying the necessity, justice, and truth of these rules of Aristotle. I take all that for granted. I only say that, if you consider them all, you will find that they are merely made to methodise Nature, to follow her step by step. If there is not unity of

> place, time, and action, in poems, there is no verisimilitude. The Poetics of Horace, which is merely an interpretation of that of Aristotle, sufficiently shows the necessity of subjecting oneself to rules.

It was according to these rules that French Classical drama was constructed, and so the opinion of Voltaire and the other French critics that Shakespeare was a barbarian becomes comprehensible.

In England Neo-Classicism had its effect, but it never established itself comfortably among a people given to commonsense and compromise. Yet Sir Philip Sidney, of all men, in his *Apology for Poetry* (1581) felt compelled to write:

> Our Tragedies, and Comedies (not without cause cried out against), observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skilful Poetry, excepting *Gorboduc* (again, I say, of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well sounding Phrases, climbing to the height of *Seneca* his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesy; yet in truth it is very defectious in the circumstances: which grieveth me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in Place and Time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by *Aristotle's* precept and common reason, but one day: there is both many days, and many places, inartificially imagined.

Sir Philip Sidney had been reading his Scaliger and Castelvetro. And presumably the learned Ben Jonson when he complained that Shakespeare 'wanted art' meant that he had neglected, either through ignorance or perversity, the 'rules' of Aristotle who 'was the first accurate critic and truest judge the world ever had'.

Thomas Rymer, at the end of the seventeenth century, when Neo-Classicism had been remade by the French 'into a kind of critical shoddy', was the most hide-bound of the English school; he ridicules the way in which 'Fancy leaps and frisks, and away she's gone; while Reason rattles the chain, and follows after', and not only the English 'Stage-quacks and Empirics in poetry', but also 'the eternal triflings of French Grammaticasters' themselves.

Dryden, Pope, and Johnson respected the Ancients, Reason, and the Rules, though they interpreted them much more liberally than the French, and it was against this Classical restraint that the Romantic writers—and painters and musicians—so violently revolted at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Dryden had little sympathy with the pedants who condemned Shakespeare because he was either ignorant of or ignored the *Poetics* of Aristotle, and who thought that English drama should imitate the classical drama of the French, of Corneille, Molière, and Racine: 'By their servile observations of the unities of time and place, and the integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive within any probability in the compass of twenty-four hours.'

Still less could he agree with Rymer, according to Macaulay 'the worst critic who ever lived', and certainly one of the most reactionary. In 1678 Rymer published a small volume called *The Tragedies of the last Age Consider'd and Examin'd by the Practice of the Ancients, and by the Common Sense of all Ages*, in which he maintained that 'had our Authors begun with Tragedy, as Sophocles and Euripides left it; had they either built on the same foundation, or after their model; we might ere this day have seen Poetry in greater perfection, and boasted such Monuments of wit as Greece or Rome never knew in all their glory'. In 1693 he followed this up with his *Short View of Tragedy* in which he ridiculed *Othello*, 'The Tragedy of the Handkerchief', a play in which there is 'some burlesk, some humour, and ramble of Comical Wit, some shew, and some Mimickry to divert the spectators: but the tragical part is plainly none other than a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour'. It is a characteristic of the English that, like the climate and the scenery of their country, they rarely run to extremes, whether in religion or politics or art or in anything else: we are not a violent people, our religious settlement was a compromise, our Revolution a bloodless one, and we have avoided on the one hand the excesses of Sturm und Drang and the over-exuberance of Baroque, on the other the sterile formulas of Vignola and of the Senecan tradition. Rymer, therefore, was a lonely figure, and Dryden with his good sense dismissed him with: 'It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides: and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind.'

It would not be true, however, to suggest that Dryden was altogether uninfluenced by French models. He was inconsistent, at one time favouring blank verse, at another rhyme; now conforming to the French 'rules', then ignoring them altogether. So it was that he and D'Avenant and others forced many of Shakespeare's plays—*Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra*—into the severe and symmetrical moulds of

classical drama; and incidentally they added a spicier love-interest than that contained in Shakespeare's plays, the heroines of which were originally acted by boys, an interest essential to success at the Court of Charles II.

For it must be remembered that the audience of Restoration times was very small and confined almost entirely to Court circles, to which Betterton and other famous actors might almost be said to belong, the Puritan middle classes shunning the theatre as something dangerously licentious, as indeed it often was. Until 1682 there were only two theatres in London, one of them Drury Lane, while from 1682 to 1695 the second Drury Lane, built by Wren, was the only theatre in the town.[1] These theatres were modifications of the Elizabethan 'private' theatre such as the Blackfriars, the winter quarters of Shakespeare's company, roofed in, artificially lit, with painted side wings, and shutters or flats that could be run together to give a change of scene. The inner stage had been enlarged and withdrawn inside a proscenium arch, and though there was still an apron stage on which the actor could be seen in the round, and could audibly declaim the poetry of Shakespeare and the verse of Dryden, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the apron stage was little more than vestigial, having inevitably for financial reasons been sacrificed to make more room for the pit, while the inner stage was becoming a framed and glamorous cavern into the recesses of which the actors could with impunity retire and mutter inaudibly, and often invisibly, the poetry of Shakespeare or the verse of Dryden, it scarcely mattered which.

Dryden was a dramatist as well as a critic, so that his Shakespearean criticism was in a special sense dramatic; but with the eighteenth century—Dryden died in 1700—came a change, and criticism became literary rather than dramatic. The adaptations of Dryden, D'Avenant, Ravenscroft, Otway, Tate, and Cibber held the stage,

[1] In 1660 Charles II issued patents to D'Avenant and Thomas Killigrew, which officially established two major theatres until 1843 when the monopolies lapsed. D'Avenant asked for and was given the exclusive right to produce, 'reform', and 'make fit' certain of Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, and Killigrew's company were later granted twenty of the plays.

D'Avenant formed the Duke of Yorke's Company which acted first at Lincoln's Inn Fields, then in 1672 at Dorset Garden. In 1663 Killigrew with the King's Company moved from their theatre in Vere Street to the First Dury Lane, which was burned down in 1672 and rebuilt by Wren in 1674. From 1682 to 1695 the two companies amalgamated and acted at Drury Lane, Betterton seceding to Lincoln's Inn Fields in the latter year.

When Covent Garden theatre was built in 1732 it and Drury Lane were the two patent theatres. By the Licensing Act of 1737 all other theatres should have been closed, but they managed to evade the law. The Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, built by Vanbrugh in 1705, became the centre for opera. Both Covent Garden and Drury Lane were burned down in the winter of 1808-9 and rebuilt to hold about 3,000 spectators. In 1843 they lost their monopoly.

but the criticism was of the plays as written by Shakespeare and printed in the Folios—the Fourth and last Folio was published in 1685. This was partly the result of the new interest in textual criticism and Shakespearean scholarship. In 1709 Nicholas Rowe, another dramatist, published his octavo edition of Shakespeare's plays, based mainly on the 1685 Folio but with an immensely improved text, and prefixed by the first formal life of Shakespeare. After this came the editions of Pope (1725), Theobald (1733), Hanmer (1744), Warburton (1747), and Johnson (1765). Then came the epoch-making editions of Capell in 1768 and of Steevens in 1773: epoch-making because their texts were based no longer mainly on the Folios, but only after careful collation with the Quartos, the serious study of which they inaugurated.

It was in this atmosphere of scholarship that Pope produced his edition of Shakespeare in 1725; the text was printed from Rowe's, but so arbitrarily altered according to Pope's personal preferences that Theobald, the first really serious Shakespearean scholar, had little difficulty in exposing its shortcomings in his *Shakespeare Restored, or a Specimen of the many Errors as well committed as unamended by Mr. Pope in his late Edition of this Poet.* There is nothing very original in Pope's *Preface*, which is interesting partly because it was written by Pope, partly because it so ably embodies the accepted opinion of Shakespeare's plays during the greater part of the eighteenth century. His method is conventional: 'I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristic excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramatic writers.' Then comes a tribute to his originality, to his characters which 'are so much Nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her', to his power over our passions, and to his sentiments, followed by an apology for his defects, 'for as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse than any other'. Some of these defects, 'a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forc'd expressions, &c.', were not entirely his own, but rather those of the illiterate audience for whom he had to write, while others might more properly be called 'Superfœtations: and arise not from want of learning or reading, but from want of thinking or judging'. There is no attempt at detailed criticism, no analysis of the poetry, of character, or of a single play; it is all very general, and a variation on the theme of, and an aoplogy for, the wild irregular genius who with his small Latin and less Greek wanted art and judgment.

This theme was developed in its most emphatic form by the French critics of the eighteenth century, notably by Voltaire, La Harpe, and

Diderot. Racine, always fine, was their man, while Shakespeare's genius flashed fitfully like lightning in a weary night. It is the wild irregular genius once more: a barbarian, sometimes even a drunken barbarian, savagely splendid in spite of his vulgarity and want of art, his extravagances and wild improbabilities. 'Il avait un génie plein de force et de fécondité, de naturel et de sublime, sans la moindre étincelle de bon goût et sans la moindre connaissance des règles.' And as for *Hamlet*, 'c'est une pièce grossière et barbare, qui ne serait pas supportée par la plus vile populace de la France et de l'Italie. On croirait que cet ouvrage est le fruit de l'imagination d'un sauvage ivre'. It is difficult for the Englishman not brought up and steeped in the tradition of classical French tragedy, its simplicity, restraint, and formal symmetry, to understand these French critics who preferred Addison's *Cato* to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Othello*.[1]

Voltaire was given the English answer by Johnson in the *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare, 1765. 'Voltaire expresses his wonder, that our author's extravagances are endured by a nation, which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered, that Addison speaks the language of poets, and Shakespeare of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning, but *Othello* is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elavated and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of Cato, but we think on Addison.' Such words, his simple and generous preference for genius and humanity to judgment, learning, and abstractions more than redeem his occasional insensibility to Shakespeare's poetry. We can always be sure of Johnson in this sense: that he meant what he said, and said what he meant, and it has been given to few men to say it so forcibly. Though he may often be wrong he is always sincere, and there is never anything perfunctory about his judgments.

With sturdy common sense Johnson defends Shakespeare's practice, censured by Voltaire, of mixing comic and tragic scenes: 'That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing.

[1] But see Lytton Strachey's admirable defence of the French point of view on p. 328.

That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life.'

It may be admitted that Johnson, like Pope, has nothing very original to say in his *Preface*: Shakespeare was a genius, but not so wild and irregular as he is often made out to be—certainly not so wild and irregular as those Frenchmen would like to think him; but he has his faults: he sacrifices virtue to convenience, his plots are often loosely formed, in comedy he is often gross, in tragedy tumid, in narrative tedious, while 'a quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it', and so on. He seems almost unaware that Shakespeare was a poet, and sometimes he is so perplexingly wrong as to appear almost wrong-headed—though that, when he writes, he never is: 'In tragedy Shakespeare often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity; but, in his comic scenes, he seems to produce, without labour, what no labour can improve. . . . In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire.'

Johnson's *Preface* is remarkable not so much for what it says as for what it is, the judicial summing up of the opinion of a century; it is the impartial estimate of Shakespeare's virtues and defects by a powerful mind anxious not to let his prejudices prevent the defects as he saw them from weighing too lightly in the balance. It is the final verdict of an epoch.

It was this judicial attitude that Hazlitt interpreted as indifference and which so infuriated him: 'We may sometimes, in order "to do a great right, do a little wrong". An overstrained enthusiasm is more pardonable with respect to Shakespear than the want of it; for our admiration cannot easily surpass his genius. . . . Dr. Johnson's Preface looks like a laborious attempt to bury the characteristic merits of his author under a load of cumbrous phraseology, and to weigh his excellences and defects in equal scales, stuffed full of "swelling figures and sonorous epithets".' And yet we cannot help thinking Mr. T. S. Eliot nearer the truth when he says, quoting the fifth paragraph of the *Preface*: 'One would willingly resign the honour of an Abbey burial for the greater honour of words like the following from a man of the greatness of their author. . . . What a valedictory and obituary for any man to receive! My point is that if you assume that the classical criticism of England was grudging in its praise of Shakespeare, I say that no poet can ask more of posterity than to be greatly honoured by the great; and Johnson's words about Shakespeare are great honour.' (*Cf.* p. 287.)

Johnson's unimpassioned estimate is the final summing up of the classical Shakespearean criticism of the hundred years that lie between the Restoration and the accession of George III—Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* was published in 1668, Johnson's *Preface* in 1765. It is the verdict of the Age of Reason, of an age that willingly accepted the restrictions of 'rules' lest too great a freedom should lead to those mysterious and incomprehensible regions

> Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
> And airy tongues that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.

Enthusiasm and curiosity were in chains, and minute discrimination was rejected in favour of the broader and safer generalisation. 'The business of the poet', said Imlac, 'is to examine, not the individual but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances. He does not number the streaks of the tulip.'[1] We do not look to Johnson, therefore, for any analysis of Shakespeare's characters—though he has a good note on Polonius and draws a moral from Falstaff. 'Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature', and he claims it for the first of Shakespeare's virtues that his characters, unlike those of other writers, are not individuals but representatives of a species.[2] Nor do we look to Johnson for an appreciation of Shakespeare's poetry, the music and *mystery* of which lay beyond the reach of his common sense. But even in English criticism of the period there are signs of the impending change, an Ariel-like impatience of the imagination to be free, a mild symptom of the mighty forces that were soon to find expression in the Sturm and Drang of Germany and the Revolution in France.

Thus, as early as 1742, the poet Gray wrote to Richard West:

> In truth, Shakespear's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellencies you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern Dramatics:
>
> > But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
> > Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:
> > I, that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
> > To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:
> > I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,

[1] *Rasselas.*

[2] Hazlitt is impatient with Johnson: 'He in fact found the general species or *didactic* form in Shakespear's characters, which was all he sought or cared for.'

> Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up—
>
> And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated.

And ten years later Joseph Warton wrote a series of critical papers on *The Tempest* and *King Lear* in which he protested that 'general criticism is on all subjects useless and unentertaining, but is more than commonly absurd with respect to Shakespeare, who must be accompanied step by step, and scene by scene, in his gradual developments of characters and passions, and whose finer features must be singly pointed out, if we would do complete justice to his genuine beauties'.

When Thomas Whately died in 1772 he was engaged on a book devoted to the analysis of Shakespeare's characters, but all that we have is the essay, published after his death, comparing Richard III and Macbeth. It is an interesting piece of critical writing and important as being a fragment from what would have been the first *book* dealing exclusively with Shakespeare's characters.[1]

William Richardson's *Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakespeare's Remarkable Characters*, 1774, is important mainly as an example of the new trend in criticism and as being the first book, as opposed to essays, to be published on Shakespeare. Intrinsically it is not very valuable, being an attempt to attach Shakespeare to philosophy, but he makes the acute remark that Hamlet's actions were the result of his mother's conduct rather than of his father's murder.

But the most remarkable essay of this transitional phase between the Classical and Romantic periods is that of Maurice Morgann *On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, published in 1777. In this essay he draws attention for the first time to the fact that there is something essentially different between Shakespeare's characters and those of other writers: 'There is a certain roundness and integrity in the forms of Shakespeare, which give them an independence as well as a relation, insomuch that we often meet with passages, which tho'

[1] It was to Whately that Hazlitt—who was infuriatingly careless about verifying his facts and quotations—referred in the Preface to his own *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817): 'A gentleman of the name of Mason, the author of a Treatise on Ornamental Gardening (not Mason the poet), began a work of a similar kind about forty years ago, but he only lived to finish a parallel between the characters of Macbeth and Richard III. which is an exceedingly ingenious piece of analytical criticism.' He adds: 'Richardson's Essays include but a few of Shakespear's principal characters. The only work which seemed to supersede the necessity of an attempt like the present was Schlegel's very admirable Lectures on the Drama.' It was a matter of some importance to the critics concerned as to who had the honour of introducing the new criticism. Coleridge claimed it for himself.

perfectly felt, cannot be sufficiently explained in words, without unfolding the whole character of the speaker.' He lifts Falstaff out of his dramatic environment and considers him as an historical person, and speculates as to how he would act under other circumstances.[1] But in the middle of his essay he can restrain himself no longer, and after attacking with gusto the 'wild, uncultivated barbarian' conception of Shakespeare, he allows himself to be carried away by his admiration for the sheer beauties of Shakespeare, and, forgetting Falstaff, writes a panegyric that might have come from the pen of Coleridge or Hazlitt, and only pauses when 'his observations have brought him near to the regions of poetic magic'—but not before he has made the significant remark that 'Poesy is *magic*, not *nature*'.

The critics of the classical school had viewed Shakespeare's work as a whole, but as it were from a distance, as though it were a building to be judged by Palladian and measurable standards of construction, and though they were bound to admit its power, and seen in certain lights indeed its sublimity, they were appalled by its lack of plan, its sprawling irrelevancies, its extravagant and barbaric mixture of styles. But the pre-Romantic critics, in particular Morgann, recognised within the bewildering diversity the unifying force of Shakespeare's creative power as exemplified in his characters, and on these they principally concentrated their attention.

This interest in the characters may have been stimulated by Garrick, with whose productions of Shakespeare—he produced twenty-four of the plays at Drury Lane between 1747 and 1776—the period coincided. Not only did he bring to the stage a new naturalism in place of the old declamatory style of acting,[2] but he abandoned many of the Restoration versions of the plays and restored much of the original text, though he was guilty of an egotistic adaptation of *Hamlet* with rather more of the prince and none of the 'grossierètés abominables' of the grave-diggers, and he made new and pretty adaptations of three or four of the comedies. He did much to popularise Shakespeare, and it would not perhaps be very far wrong to say that the

[1] This is the earliest example of what Croce calls *objectivistic* criticism, legitimate up to a point, but 'what is known as the *Hamlet-Litteratur* is the most appalling of all these manifestations and it is daily on the increase. Historians, psychologists, lovers of amorous adventures, gossips, police-spies, criminologists investigate the character, the intentions, the thoughts, the affections, the temperament, the previous life, the tricks they played, the secrets they hid, their family and social relations, and so on, and crowd, without any real claim to do so, round the "characters of Shakespeare", detaching them from the creative centre of the play and transferring them into a pretended objective field, as though they were made of flesh and blood.'—*Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille.*

[2] 'Garrick was no declaimer; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken *To be, or not to be* better than he did; yet he was the only actor I ever saw whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy.'—*Johnson.*

popular conception of Shakespeare even today is that projected by Garrick in the statue that Roubiliac made to his order, a peculiarly composite and histrionic figure.[1]

Garrick retired in 1776, Maurice Morgann's essay was published in 1777, and between then and 1811, when Lamb wrote his essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare*, there was no English Shakespearean criticism of importance, though Coleridge gave a course of lectures as early as 1802. In the theatre it was the age of Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble,[2] the manager first of Drury Lane and then from 1803 to 1817 of the rival house of Covent Garden. Both these theatres had been burned down within six months of one another in 1808-9 and were rebuilt on a considerably larger scale to cope with the swelling audience; this increase in size necessitated a slower and more simplified form of acting than Garrick's, something very different from the intimate productions of Shakespeare's time.

But though the last quarter of the eighteenth century produced little English criticism it marks a new era in scholarship. In 1778 appeared Steevens's revised edition of the plays, containing in the introduction a mass of new material, including extracts from the Stationers' Register, a drawing of the Globe Theatre, a reproduction of Shakespeare's will, and a catalogue of the quartos then known. Capell's *Notes and Various Readings* and *The School of Shakespeare*

[1] It was the statue of Garrick in Westminster Abbey that inspired Lamb to write his essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare*:

'Taking a turn the other day in the Abbey, I was struck with the affected attitude of a figure, which I do not remember to have seen before, and which upon examination proved to be a whole-length of the celebrated Mr. Garrick. Though I would not go so far with some good catholics abroad as to shut players altogether out of concecrated ground, yet I own I was not a little scandalised at the introduction of theatrical airs and gestures into a place set apart to remind us of the saddest realities. Going nearer, I found inscribed under this harlequin figure the following lines:

To paint fair nature by divine command,
Her magic pencil in his glowing hand,
A Shakespeare rose: then, to expand his fame,
Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
Though sunk in death the forms the Poet drew,
The actor's genius bade them breathe anew;
Though, like the bard himself, in night they lay
Immortal Garrick call'd them back to day
And till Eternity with pow'r sublime
Shall mark the mortal hour of hoary Time,
Shakespeare and Garrick like twin-stars shall shine,
And earth irradiate with a beam divine.

It would be an insult to my readers' understandings to attempt anything like a criticism on this farrago of false thoughts and nonsense.'

[2] 'It is difficult for a frequent playgoer to disembarrass the idea of Hamlet from the person and voice of Mr. K. We speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs. S.' —*Lamb.*

were printed in 1779-80 and published in 1783, with an essay on the chronology of the plays based partly on internal evidence, partly on the external evidence of Meres's *Palladis Tamia* and of the Stationers' Register. In 1778 the industrious Malone had published his *Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written*, in which he explains how 'all the ancient copies of Shakespeare's plays, hitherto discovered, have been collated with the most scrupulous accuracy. . . . Almost every circumstance that tradition or history has preserved relative to him or his works has been investigated, and laid before the public.' He followed this up in 1780 with an edition of the *Poems* and the seven doubtful plays of the Third Folio; in 1790 he produced his own ten-volume edition of Shakespeare's works, and his labours were crowned in 1821 with the publication in twenty-one volumes of 'Boswell's Malone', the Third Variorum edition which embodies the results of eighteenth-century research, not only into the text, authenticity, and chronology of the plays, but also into Shakespeare's life, verse, grammar, even punctuation, and into contemporary literature and records such as Henslowe's *Diary*.

But it was from Germany that came in this period the criticism that revolutionised the conception of Shakespeare, the dramatist. Until the eighteenth century Germany, whose polite society spoke French, had no great native literature, and taking their lead from Frederick the Great, her writers were content to imitate the Neo-Classical French who derided the barbarous Shakespeare; but in the second half of the century there appeared a school of writers who reacted violently against both political and literary despotism, against tyranny in any form, and therefore against the rules and restrictions of classicism, and who instead of Racine chose Shakespeare as their model. The very characteristics that Voltaire condemned, his lawlessness and irregularity, were seized upon as virtues by these apostles of Sturm und Drang, and Shakespeare was hailed as a 'pure virgin genius, ignorant of rules and limits, a force as irresistible as those of nature'. In 1767-8 Lessing wrote a series of articles in connection with the newly established but short-lived German National Theatre in Hamburg; these are known as the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, and in them he discusses the true meaning of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and maintains the inferiority of French tragedy to that of Shakespeare. 'But is it always Shakespeare, always and eternally Shakespeare who understood everything better than the French?' he asks rhetorically. And the answer implied is 'Yes'.

But the Sturm und Drang movement may be said to begin in Strasburg in the winter of 1770-1, when Herder, a warmer and even

more enthusiastic supporter of Shakespeare than Lessing, opened the young Goethe's imagination to the beauties of Shakespeare. Goethe tells how the first page of Shakespeare that he read made him a life-long admirer, and how he was overwhelmed by the colossal scale of the characters and his elemental power. With Goethe as champion the position of Shakespeare in Germany was assured, and A. W. Schlegel's brilliant translation of the plays, 1797-1810, besides being perhaps the most significant achievement of the Romantic School, made Shakespeare into a national poet of the German people.[1] German criticism is more philosophic than that of England and France: for Schlegel Shakespeare is 'in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a protecting spirit of a higher order', and the German critics as a whole saw in his plays a deeper and more mysterious significance than had hitherto been perceived, but a significance that was appreciated by the English Romantics and was powerfully to influence the work of Coleridge.

It was this discovery of Shakespeare by the Germans, almost their identification of Shakespeare with themselves, and particularly Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art* in 1808, that was partly responsible for Hazlitt's book on *The Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817), the first English *book* of Romantic Shakespearean criticism. 'We will at the same time confess', he writes, 'that some little jealousy of the character of the national understanding was not without its share in producing the following undertaking, for "we were piqued" that it should be reserved for a foreign critic to give "reasons for the faith which we English have in Shakespear".'

Hazlitt's book had a conventional enough title, reminiscent of the critics of forty years before, of Whately and Morgann, but there is little that is conventional in the text; it is something new in the criticism of Shakespeare, not a judicial balancing of virtues against defects, not Shakespeare at a distance but Shakespeare at close quarters, an intimate revelation of the beauties of the plays. Ostensibly the theme is 'the characters', but, like Morgann, Hazlitt is carried away by the magic of poetry which, in his 'happy intoxication', he cannot refrain from quoting—and often misquoting—at length, and the book becomes the first interpretation of Shakespeare in English. 'The book', wrote Francis Jeffrey, 'is written less to tell the reader what Mr. H. *knows* about Shakespeare or his writings, than to explain to him what he *feels* about them—and *why* he feels so—and thinks that

[1] Croce, the Italian, writes ironically: 'Shakespeare stands, either beside Dürer and Rembrandt, or on a spur of Parnassus, facing Homer and Aeschylus on another spur, sometimes permitting Dante to stand at his side—Dante was of German origin—while the impotent crowd of poets of the Latin race seethes at his feet.'

all who profess to love poetry should feel so likewise. . . . When we have said that his observations are generally right, we have said, in substance, that they are not generally original.' But the observations were original in this sense: that whatever other people might have thought, nobody before had written in such detail and at such length, with such understanding and with such gusto on the *poetry* of Shakespeare. It is all the more remarkable that his idolatry of Shakespeare (not to say his admiration) ceases with his plays, that *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* appear to him 'like a couple of ice-boxes', and that he did not well know what to say about the *Sonnets*, for it seemed to him that 'in expressing the thoughts of others, Shakespear was inspired; in expressing his own, he was a mechanic'.

Lamb wrote little Shakespearean criticism, but the little he wrote is the more precious for its scarcity. In 1808 he had produced his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare*, the notes to which have never been surpassed for their sensitive appreciation of the Elizabethans,[1] and reveal the startling gap that separates him and the Romantics from Johnson and the Classicists. Then in 1811 came his essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage Representation*, with its passionate and typically Romantic plea for the liberty of the imagination and its emancipation from the tyranny of the stage. 'The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted', he roundly declares, and he has never been satisfactorily answered, though Mr. Granville-Barker has perhaps come the nearest to an answer.[2] The fact remains that many of those who care most for Shakespeare are infrequent attenders at the performances of his plays, or at least of his great tragedies.[3] The theatre is invaluable as an introduction to Shakespearean tragedy, but

[1] See, for example, his note on Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (p. 98), and his comparison of Fletcher with Shakespeare:

'Fletcher's ideas moved slow; his versification, though sweet, is tedious, it stops at every turn; he lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately, that we see their junctures. Shakspeare mingles every thing, runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure.'

[2] See p. 448.

[3] 'How, I ask you, are stage-enthusiasts—I ask you, Granville-Barker, and you, too, Desmond MacCarthy, and you, Maurice Baring—going to answer Robertson, Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Goethe and me? It is really up to you to make a reply; and such a reply to be valid should, I suggest, enumerate first of all the scenes in Shakespeare's plays which are only effective upon the stage, and secondly a record of concrete esthetic experiences, of the rendering of Shakespearean rôles by great actors and actresses by which the imaginative impression of these rôles has been deepened and enriched.'—*Logan Pearsall Smith: On Reading Shakespeare.*

But Hazlitt was not a very certain supporter of Lamb: 'Perhaps one of the finest pieces of acting that ever was witnessed on the stage, is Mr. Kean's manner of doing this scene and his repetition of the word *Banished*. He treads close indeed upon the genius of his author.

for many of the initiated, as for Lamb, the 'fine abstraction' of reading the plays, or rather of reading their poetry, is preferable.

But it is Coleridge above all others who is the interpreter of Shakespeare, the inspired critic who revealed for the first time the immense range of Shakespeare's genius, and pointed out the innumerable and previously undiscovered approaches to an appreciation of it. He was jealous of his claim to be the founder of the new criticism and resented the implication in Wordsworth's essay that he might owe something to the Germans. The passage in Wordsworth's *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface* (1815) is worth quoting at length:

> At this day the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare', is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre: an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties'. How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature?

To this Coleridge replied in a letter dated February 1818 'to a gentleman who attended the course of Lectures given in the spring of that year':

> My next Friday's lecture will, if I do not grossly flatter-blind myself, be interesting, and the points of view not only original, but new to the audience. I make this distinction, because sixteen or rather seventeen

A passage which this celebrated actor and able commentator on Shakespear (actors are the best commentators on the poets) did not give with equal truth,' etc.

On the other hand:

Boswell: 'But has Garrick not brought Shakspeare into notice?'

Johnson: 'Sir, to allow that, would be to lampoon the age. Many of Shakspeare's plays are the worse for being acted: Macbeth, for instance.'

> years ago, I delivered eighteen lectures on Shakspeare, at the Royal Institution: three-fourths of which appeared at that time startling paradoxes, although they have since been adopted even by men, who then made use of them as proofs of my flighty and paradoxical turn of mind; all to prove that Shakspeare's judgment was, if possible, still more wonderful than his genius; or rather, that the contradistinction itself between judgment and genius rested on an utterly false theory. This, and its proofs and grounds have been—I should not have said adopted, but produced as their own legitimate children by some, and by others the merit of them attributed to a foreign writer, whose lectures were not given orally till two years after mine, rather than to their countryman; though I dare appeal to the most adequate judges . . . whether there is one single principle in Schlegel's work (which is not an admitted drawback from its merits), that was not established and applied in detail by me.

Whether Coleridge owed anything to Schlegel, or Schlegel to Coleridge, or whether they worked independently, as seems most probable, is perhaps not very important; but it is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of Coleridge's criticism itself. It is true that Coleridge can be intolerably tedious, that he rarely seems able to resist a philosophical détour—'I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so', he ingenuously remarks—and that occasionally, like a conjurer bringing rabbits out of a hat, he professes to have discovered treasure in some neglected and dusty corner of his subject. Sir Walter Raleigh in his *Six Essays on Johnson* (1907), writing of the Romantic critics in general but with particular reference to Coleridge, remarks:

> The romantic attitude begins to be fatiguing. The great romantic critics, when they are writing at their best, do succeed in communicating to the reader those thrills of wonder and exaltation which they have felt in contact with Shakespeare's imaginative work. This is not a little thing to do; but it cannot be done continuously, and it has furnished the workaday critic with a vicious model. There is a taint of insincerity about romantic criticism, from which not even the great romantics are free. They are never in danger from the pitfalls that waylay the plodding critic; but they are always falling upward, as it were, into vacuity. They love to lose themselves in *O altitudo*. From the most worthless material they will fashion a new hasty altar to the unknown God. When they are inspired by their divinity they say wonderful things; when the inspiration fails them their language is maintained at the same height, and they say more than they feel. You can never be sure of them.

This is excellently said, and all this may be admitted, but the solid achievement of Coleridge remains, and it is worth more than that of any other Shakespearean critic before or since.

The critics of the classical school, particularly the French, judged Shakespeare as a dramatist whose worth must depend on the structure of his plays and the conduct of his actions; the one they found too irregular, the other too extravagant. In England about the middle of the eighteenth century came a transitional phase, when a few amateur critics seized on the characters as the most significant feature of the plays, while in Germany a few years later the characters were alternately defined by the light and obscured by the mists of metaphysics and mysticism. Coleridge modified and developed the criticism of all these aspects of Shakespeare's work, added his own inspired contribution and swept them into a great critical synthesis.

His first object was to overthrow the pernicious classical doctrine that Shakespeare's plays are remarkable only because the splendour of the parts compensates for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole: 'In all the successive courses of lectures delivered by me, since my first attempt at the Royal Institution, it has been, and it still remains, my object, to prove that in all points from the most important to the most minute, the judgment of Shakspeare is commensurate with his genius—nay, that his genius reveals itself in his judgment, as in its most exalted form.' This he does once and for all when he explains how 'the true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form'; that Shakespeare's form is not mechanically impressed from without, but like natural forms is organic, shaping itself as it develops, from within.

Coleridge's second great contribution to the critical study of Shakespeare was to proclaim and demonstrate to the world that not only was Shakespeare a great dramatist but also the greatest poet that England, certainly, possibly the world, had produced. It is remarkable that, apart from contemporaries and near-contemporaries like Ben Jonson and Milton, no critic before Coleridge seems to have been aware that Shakespeare was before all else a poet.[1] Indeed, this is still not widely appreciated, and the divinest aspect of Shakespeare's genius, his poetry, is the one that has been most neglected. Thousands of books have been written about Shakespeare and every subject remotely connected with him, from botany to Bacon, but none has yet dealt adequately with his poetry. Shakespeare was a poet before he was a dramatist, almost, it might be said, in his last plays a poet

[1] The *Biographia Literaria* was published in 1817, *Notes and Lectures upon Shakspeare* posthumously in 1849, but some of the notes were compiled and some of the lectures delivered as early as 1802.

after he was a dramatist, and it is possible that he turned playwright only, or at least mainly, from economic motives. 'Clothed in radiant armour', says Coleridge, 'Shakspeare came forward to demand the throne of fame, as the dramatic poet of England. . . . But he had shown himself a poet, previously to his appearance as a dramatic poet', and in the ensuing analysis of *Venus and Adonis* he shows that the young Shakespeare had 'the chief, if not every, requisite of a poet'.

It is by the means of these two new conceptions of Shakespeare, as a great artist and a great poet, that Coleridge achieves what is after all the end of his criticism, the 'communicating to the reader those thrills of wonder and exaltation which he has felt in contact with Shakespeare's imaginative work'. 'Not a little thing to do', indeed! Without in the least wishing to belittle the achievements of Johnson, I suggest that the reader look at Coleridge's notes on, say, *Romeo and Juliet* or *The Tempest*, and then consider who has added most to his understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare, Johnson or Coleridge. He may be an uncertain guide, and his followers need to be on their guard against his aberrations, but if, as Mr. Eliot says, 'it is impossible to understand Shakespeare criticism to this day, without a familiar acquaintance with Coleridge's lectures and notes', it might almost as truly be said that without such an acquaintance it is impossible to understand—so far as it is possible to understand at all—Shakespeare himself.

The fourth of the great Romantic critics was De Quincey, who though, like Lamb, he wrote little Shakespearean criticism, yet wrote one of the finest and most penetrating appreciations that have ever been written: *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823). Perhaps it is not altogether irrelevant here to observe that in *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevski adopts the same device as Shakespeare does It will be remembered that when Raskolnikov, with whom we are in sympathy—in De Quincey's sense of the word—has murdered the two women in the garret there comes a ring at the bell and cheerful talk on the stairs outside which, like the knocking at the gate and the porter's ribaldry in *Macbeth*, 'makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them'.

When Wordsworth wrote in 1815 that French critics had abated nothing of their aversion to Shakespeare and that Baron Grimm was the only French writer really to understand him, he was not being strictly accurate. There were two writers, at least, of the epoch of

the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the uneasy period that lies between French Classicism and Romanticism, who did not think of Shakespeare as a *bouffon*. Madame de Staël, although her roots were in the eighteenth century, recognised that the age of Voltaire was over, and in her *De la Littérature* (1800) admitted that England and Germany, Shakespeare and Schiller were the models for France. Although she could not condone all the extravagances of Shakespeare, and incidentally ranked *Henry VI* with *King Lear*, her appreciation is far less qualified than Voltaire's; Shakespeare has his faults, but he is certainly not a buffoon. Chateaubriand, too, in his *Mélanges Littéraires* (1801), though not without regret for the glories of the past, turns to Shakespeare as a source of the Romantic beauty which he preached.

But it was the youthful Victor Hugo who trumpeted the full Romantic faith and scattered the rearguard of Classicism.[1] 'Art', he maintained, 'has nothing to do with leading-strings, with hand-cuffs, with gags: it says "Go your ways" and lets you loose in the great garden of poetry, where there is no forbidden fruit. Space and time are the domain of the poet. Let him go where he will and do what he pleases: this is the Law.' And again: 'Is the work good or bad? This is the whole extent of the critical province.' In his *Preface to Cromwell* he vigorously attacks the unities, defends Shakespeare's combination of the sublime with the grotesque, and proclaims him a god of the theatre who unites in himself the genius of Corneille, Molière, and Beaumarchais. A Frenchman could scarcely make a greater claim than this, and though other French critics could not go all the way with him, there was in nineteenth-century France a generous appreciation of Shakespeare and a wide recognition that he is perhaps the greatest of them all.

In the English theatre the period after 1815 begins with Edmund Kean, Hazlitt's favourite, and like his predecessors Garrick and Kemble, and his successors Macready, Phelps, Charles Kean, Irving, and Tree, a fiery star about whom wandered the pallid satellites who made up the rest of the company. He was followed by Macready, who had the good taste to restore Shakespeare's *King Lear* in place of Tate's version, and generally treated Shakespeare in a scholarly fashion. In 1843 Drury Lane and Covent Garden lost their mono-

[1] How powerful these forces still were may be judged by the violence of the attack on Hugo when at the opening of *Hernani* he was so vulgar as to mention a back-staircase, *un escalier dérobé*, and so revolutionary as to place *escalier* at the end of one line and *dérobé* at the beginning of the next. Words had come to be divided into those that were 'noble' and those that were 'bas', and only the noble were permissible in poetry. This explains why, at about the time Hugo was writing his *Preface to Cromwell*, there was a riot in the theatre during a performance of *Othello* when the word 'mouchoir' was mentioned.

poly, and though the increase in number of the theatres checked their increase in size, Drury Lane and Covent Garden were already so big that a large proportion of the audience could not hear and could scarcely see the actors. This led naturally to exaggerated gestures and speech and to a dependence on music and spectacle for effect, a development that was intensified by the disappearance of the apron stage and by the public demand for realism. This movement towards realism may perhaps be said to have begun with Kemble who in 1823, with the aid of the antiquarian J. R. Planché, produced *King John* in elaborately correct historical costume. How far this antiquarian-spectacular movement had gone by the middle of the century may be judged by Charles Kean's preface to his production of *The Winter's Tale* in 1856, a formidable play for the would-be realist producer when 'chronological contradictions abound, inasmuch as reference is made to the Delphic Oracle, Christian burial, an Emperor of Russia, and an Italian painter of the sixteenth century'. However, he does his best:

> The pivot on which the story revolves, is in fact the decision pronounced by the oracle of Delphi; and taking this incident as the corner stone of the whole fabric, I have adopted a period when Syracuse, according to Thucydides, had, from a mere Doric colony, increased in magnificence to a position in no way inferior to that of Athens herself, when at the summit of her political prosperity. An opportunity is thus afforded of reproducing a classical era, and placing before the eyes of the spectator, *tableaux vivants* of the private and public life of the ancient Greeks, at a time when the arts flourished to a perfection, the scattered vestiges of which still delight and instruct the world. . . .
>
> To connect the country known as 'Bohemia' with an age so remote, would be impossible: I have therefore followed the suggestion of Sir Thomas Hanmer by the substitution of *Bithynia*. The difference of name in no way affects the incidents or metre of the play, while it enables me to represent the costume of the inhabitants of Asia Minor at a corresponding period, associated so intimately with Greece, and acquiring additional interest from close proximity to the Homeric kingdom of Troy.

This reproduction of a classical era also had the advantage that it enabled him to introduce a Pyrrhic Dance and Cronos instead of 'Time, as Chorus', together with 'an allegorical tableau of Luna and the Stars (personified), sinking before the car of Phœbus, which rises with all its attributes of splendour. Each figure is taken from an antique, or from the works of Flaxman.' It also enabled him to substitute for the sheep-shearing scene a Dionysiac Festival at which,

no doubt, instead of 'hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram, the marigold that goes to bed with the sun', Perdita distributed 'the vegetation peculiar to Bithynia, adopted from the private drawings of George Scharf, Esq., F.S.A., taken on the spot'.

Song and dance, and elaborate scenery laboriously moved, left little time for Shakespeare's text, and what was left after cutting had to be rearranged so that scenes could be run together. This was the tradition handed down to Henry Irving, who dominated the stage for the last thirty years of the century and performed Shakespeare with splendour in the grand style, though without the 'richly upholstered revelations' of Tree, and incidentally without the speed and fluidity so necessary to Shakespearean productions.

In the middle if the century Phelps had proved to be an honourable exception to the craze for the spectacular, producing at Sadler's Wells nearly all Shakespeare's plays with simple settings. In the last fifty years the movement back to Elizabethan simplicity was begun by F. R. Benson, and by Mr. William Poel 'with fanatical courage, when "realism" was at the tottering height of its triumph in the later revivals of Sir Henry Irving', and continued by Mr. Nugent Monck at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, and by Mr. Granville-Barker, whose *Prefaces to Shakespeare* are among the most valuable and original contributions to recent Shakespearean criticism.

In the nineteenth century there was a steady and organised advance in Shakespearean scholarship. The first Shakespeare Society lasted from 1840 to 1853, when the forgeries of its founder, J. P. Collier, were discovered. The second Shakespeare Society (1873-94) was founded by F. J. Furnivall who, with J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, was the outstanding Shakespearean scholar of the century. Both societies published an immense amount of valuable material, and Furnivall explained the objects of the two: 'Antiquarian illustration, emendation, and verbal criticism—to say nothing of forgery, or at least, publication of forg'd documents—were of the first school. The subject of the growth, the oneness of Shakspere, the links between his successive plays, the light thrown on each by comparison with its neighbour, the distinctive characteristics of each Period and its contrast with the others, the treatment of the same or like incidents etc. in the different Periods of Shakspere's life—this subject, in all its branches, is the special business of the present, the second school of Victorian students.'

Halliwell-Phillipps concentrated mainly on biographical material and contemporary records; Furnivall developed the study of verse-tests, begun by Malone in his *Attempt to ascertain the order in which Shakespeare's plays were written*, but only as a means to the end of

'higher æsthetic criticism', and the remedying of 'the great defect of the English school of Shakespeareans, their neglect to study Shakspere as a whole'. How faulty was this knowledge of the chronological order of the plays at the beginning of the century can be seen by looking at Coleridge's attempted classifications, in which he placed *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* as two of the very earliest plays to be written. The discovery of the approximate order and the consequent ability to 'study Shakespeare as a whole' was perhaps the most important contribution of the Victorian scholars.

The *Cambridge Shakespeare*, which has become almost the standard text, was published in 1863-6, and advances were made in the study of Shakespeare's English (Abbott's *Shakespeare Grammar*, 1869), of Shakespeare's Stage (Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage*, 1837), of Shakespeare's Life (Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare*, 1898), and in many other directions.

The most important recent publications have been, perhaps, Sir Edmund Chambers's *Elizabethan Stage* (1923) and his invaluable *William Shakespeare* (1930), an exhaustive study of facts and problems, and H. Granville-Barker's *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1927-46), studies of the plays from the angle of the producer; while the most important research has been that of A. W. Pollard, J. Dover Wilson, W. W. Greg, and R. W. Chambers into Shakespeare's handwriting in the play of *Sir Thomas More*,[1] A. W. Pollard's work on the transmission of the text from Quarto or manuscript to Folio and his division of the Quartos into 'Good' and 'Bad', and Dr. Caroline Spurgeon's analysis of Shakespeare's imagery.

In Germany, France, and in Russia too, Shakespeare was one of the main sources of inspiration of the Romantic Movement that swept through Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century, and since then he has been firmly established as the most influential and international of poets,[2] although the Germans have from time to time attempted to naturalise him. According to Gervinus, writing in 1850, 'the man who first valued Shakespeare according to his full desert was indisputably Lessing. One single passage, where, in his "Dramaturgie", he speaks of Romeo and Juliet, shows plainly that he apprehended his plays in their innermost nature.' Then a few years later, 'in "Wilhelm Meister", Goethe produced that characteristic of Hamlet, which is like a key to all works of the poet'. So it is small wonder that 'through industry and love, just as England did with our Handel, we have won the great poet for ourselves . . . and Shake-

[1] *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More.* (See p. 490.)

[2] Georg Brandes's massive *William Shakespeare* (1896) has done much for Shakespeare on the Continent.

speare, from his diffusion and influence, has become a German poet almost more than any of our native writers', though he complains that 'England has not suffered herself to be robbed of the poet in the same manner as we have been of the musician'.

In England the impact of the great Romantic critics was twofold, both good and bad: on the one hand they succeeded in communicating to others something of the ecstasy they experienced themselves in their discovery of Shakespeare, on the other they supplied later critics with 'a vicious model', and the nineteenth century is full of what Croce calls *exclamatory* criticism, 'which instead of understanding a poet in his particularity, his finite-infinity, drowns him beneath a flood of superlatives'. Few people, not even Voltaire, had ever questioned Shakespeare's genius; on the other hand, until about 1770 few people had admitted his 'art'; but when Coleridge had demonstrated that Shakespeare's art was as great as, if not greater than, his genius, what could there be left to find fault with? Shakespeare was beyond criticism and there was nothing left for the critics but to adore and see who could shout his adulation the loudest.

It is perhaps a little unfair of Croce to single out Carlyle and Swinburne as two of his examples of critics of the exclamatory school —Victor Hugo is the third; Carlyle was speaking in his prophetic capacity rather than in that of critic when he wrote *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, though it must be confessed that he was something less than critical when he wrote: 'We may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakspeare too; not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms.' On the other hand it is not easy to see why Croce should think Carlyle ridiculous when he 'stood in perplexity before the hypothetical dilemma, as to whether England could better afford to lose "the empire of India or Shakespeare".' Carlyle was being more prophetic than he knew: 'Indian Empire will go at any rate, some day', and though the dilemma was hypothetical, India was a real measure of the value that Carlyle attached to Shakespeare; and should not we too be forced to answer with him, 'We cannot give up our Shakespeare'? As for Swinburne, he was, like Coleridge, a poet interpreting a poet, and though, when his hyperbole borders on the ridiculous, as when he says that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* stands 'without and above any possible and imaginable criticism', it is no sufficient excuse to say that he always fell into hyperbole when talking about the Elizabethans, whether Drake, or Marlowe, or Shakespeare, yet it is only fair to add that this inspired and errant critic, again like Coleridge, gives 'here and there marvellous interpretations, and above all, little, immense insights into the processes of artistic creation'.

Side by side with exclamatory criticism went the organised and scientific study of statistics based on verse-tests under the leadership of Furnivall, with the object of discovering the chronological order of the plays so that Shakespeare could be studied as a whole, for 'Shakspere *must* be studied chronologically, and as a whole'. In Germany, Ulrici and Gervinus were working along similar lines, and when Gervinus published his *Shakespeare Commentaries* in 1850 the plays were arranged in an order not unlike that generally accepted today, and divided into three periods representing three stages of Shakespeare's development. Furnivall wrote a long Introduction to the English edition of 1875 in which he explained his own position and the importance of Gervinus's book:

> Though Gervinus's criticism is mainly æsthetic, yet, in settling the dates and relations of Shakspere's plays, he always shows a keen appreciation of the value of external evidence, and likewise of the metrical evidence, the markt changes of metre in Shakspere's verse as he advanct in life. As getting the right succession of Shakspere's plays is 'a condition precedent' to following the growth of his mind, and as 'metrical tests' are a great help to this end, though they have had, till lately, little attention given to them in England, I wish to say a few words on them. . . .
>
> Shakspere's course is thus shown to have run from the amorousness and fun of youth, through the strong patriotism of early manhood, to the wrestling with the dark problems that beset the man of middle age, to the time of gloom which weighd on Shakspere (as on so many men) in later life, when, though outwardly successful, the world seemd all against him, and his mind dwelt with sympathy on scenes of faithlessness of friends, treachery of relations and subjects, ingratitude of children, scorn of his kind; till at last, in his Stratford home again, peace came to him, Miranda and Perdita in their lovely freshness and charm greeted him, and he was laid by his quiet Avon's side.

This was the first statement of the reconciliation and serenity theme in its sentimental and popular form, an elaboration, made possible by Victorian scholarship, of Rowe's comfortable picture of Shakespeare spending 'the latter part of his life in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends'.

The oneness of Shakespeare was accentuated in Gervinus's work by the unifying effect of his philosophical method. In the words of his translator:

> He has indeed so far followed in the steps of his predecessors in regarding his author not only as a poet and a dramatist, but as a moralist, and a master of human nature. But he has done more than this. Taking

> up the idea which Goethe only suggested in his criticism of Hamlet, he has pursued the course which the German poet indicated. He has perceived one ruling idea pervading every play, linking every part, every character, every episode, to one single aim. He has pointed out the binding thread in things which before seemed disconnected, and has found a justification for much that before seemed needlessly offensive and even immoral.

But this is not altogether a true statement of affairs: Gervinus often forgets the dramatist, and scarcely remembers the poet, in his humility before 'that severe moral austerity' that justifies the death of Desdemona and Othello. It was this kind of interpretation that moved Rümelin to protest that such dramatic justice is like Draco's sanguinary code, which decreed a single penalty for all misdeeds: death.

When Furnivall founded the New Shakespeare Society in 1873 he had written reproachfully:

> It is a disgrace to England, that even now, 258 years after Shakspere's death, the study of him has been so narrow, and the criticism, however good, so devoted to the mere text and its illustration, and to studies of single plays, that no book by an Englishman exists which deals in any worthy manner with Shakspeare as a whole, which tracks the rise and growth of his genius from the boyish romanticism or the sharp youngmanishness of his early plays, to the magnificence, the splendour, the divine intuition, which marks his ablest works. The profound and generous 'Commentaries' of Gervinus—an honour to a German to have written, a pleasure to an Englishman to read—is still the only book known to me that comes near the true treatment and the dignity of its subject, or can be put into the hands of the student who wants to know the mind of Shakspere.

But his appeal was answered in 1875 when Edward Dowden published his *Shakspere: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art*, the first attempt in English to treat Shakespeare as a whole, 'to connect the study of Shakspeare's works with an inquiry after the personality of the writer, and to observe, as far as is possible, in its several stages the growth of his intellect and character from youth to full maturity'. For this purpose he adopted Furnivall's 'Trial Table of the Order of Shakespeare's Plays', and his division into four periods—instead of Gervinus's three. It is a very readable book, but contains a somewhat idealised and sentimentalised picture of Shakespeare and his heroines, a picture that was readily acceptable to the Victorians, and one that has served as a model for many later critical studies.

Ethical, exclamatory, and sentimental criticism, however, were not

without their opponents. In 1864, the year of the tercentenary celebrations, Gustav Rümelin published his *Shakespeare Studies by a Realist* as a counterblast to the orgies of adulation. It may be perverse in parts, but it is a refreshing and significant attempt to extract Shakespeare from the vacuum created by over-imaginative critics and German professors and to reinstate him in his Elizabethan environment. R. G. Moulton's *Shakespeare as a dramatic artist. A popular illustration of scientific criticism* (1885) was a protest against the Dowden school of sentimental subjective interpretation, and an attempt to establish dramatic criticism as a regular inductive science. Tolstoy's remarkable outburst in 1906 is in a different category: Rümelin and Moulton protested against Shakespeare's critics, Tolstoy against Shakespeare himself, because his work did not square with his conception of art: it does not transmit the highest religious feeling, nor does it unite all men in one common feeling, and therefore, like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, it must be relegated to the rank of bad art.

The last and probably the best book of the Victorian age on Shakespeare was A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904): a study of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, from a single point of view, that of dramatic appreciation. It is not an attempt, therefore, to treat Shakespeare as a whole, but is in the direct line of descent from Whately and Morgann, Hazlitt and Coleridge, and is also one of the masterpieces of English criticism.

But the cold, searching wind of the new realist criticism, the first gust of which had been felt as early as 1864 with Rümelin's *Shakespeare Studies by a Realist*, was already freshening at the beginning of the new century. In 1906 appeared Lytton Strachey's essay on *Shakespeare's Final Period* in which he attacks the cosy idealism of Furnivall and Dowden, and their conception, built on the firm foundation of the chronological order of the plays, of a quiet and serene final period, and suggests instead a Shakespeare 'bored with people, bored with real life, bored, in fact, with everything except poetry and poetical dreams'.

The following year was published what is perhaps the best and most balanced picture that we have of Shakespeare as a whole, Sir Walter Raleigh's *Shakespeare*. Raleigh turns away not only from Dowden's sentiment but also from the excesses of Coleridge to the 'cool and manly utterances of Dryden, Johnson, and Pope with a heightened sense of the value of moderation and candour'.

In 1910 came the first application of the new science to the study of Shakespeare with Dr. Ernest Jones's *The Œdipus-Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery*. According to this theory Claudius

succeeds in doing the two things that Hamlet had unconsciously wished to do: killed his father and married his mother, yet his power to act against his powerful and hated rival is paralysed by his own sense of guilt. In the light of modern knowledge this is an attractively simple explanation, though it is difficult to square with all the facts, and it seems unlikely to have been Shakespeare's.

The object of the modern realist critics is to clear away the accumulations of Romantic and Victorian idealism and the mists of German metaphysics, and to relate Shakespeare to his real Elizabethan environment, as for instance does Professor Stoll in *The Ghosts* (1907), where he shows that Shakespeare's ghosts were real and visible apparitions, revivified corpses, and not the abstractions of nineteenth-century philosophy. In his later publications Professor Stoll, 'the leader of the American and hardest-boiled of all the hard-boiled schools of Shakespeare criticism', maintains that we have sentimentalised Shylock, who was for Shakespeare and his audience an object of derision, and over-subtilised his criminals, who were actuated by fear and not by such emasculated emotions as conscience and remorse; that Falstaff, in spite of Morgann, was a coward, and that Hamlet is a straightforward hero in an Elizabethan revenge-play who needs neither Goethe nor Freud to explain the mystery, for there is no mystery there to be explained.

Similarly the two best known of the modern German school of critics, Professors Creizenach and Schücking, are anti-romantic and adopt the historical method, drawing their conclusions not only from the plays but also from the Elizabethan scene. According to them Shakespeare's method was that of 'episodic intensification'; his plays were written to be effective on the stage, not for critical reading in the study, and to secure a series of effective episodes he readily sacrificed both the structure of the play and consistency of character.

Professor Croce in his *Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille* (1920) shows little respect for many of the nineteenth-century forms of criticism: the exclamatory, the rhetorical, the objectivistic, the biographical-æsthetic, the æsthetic criticism of philologists, and the Romantic criticism of images. He maintains that though Shakespeare owed much of his thought and material to Renaissance Italy, 'the essential point to remember is that the poetry had its origin solely in himself', and that it is by his poetry that Shakespeare is to be judged.

Of recent English critics one of the best known is Mr. J. M. Robertson,[1] the leader of the 'disintegrators'—those who reject much of the Folio as spurious, of whom Creizenach is another—who finds

[1] *The Shakespeare Canon*, 1922-3-5.

in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'the first, and indeed only complete work' of Shakespeare, and a supporter of Lamb's thesis that 'the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of almost any other dramatist whatever'. 'Not so', replies Mr. Granville-Barker in his *Preface to Shakespeare*; Lamb was merely disgusted with the theatre of Kemble's day, and based his arguments on 'the stage of spectacle, not upon Shakespeare's.' His object, therefore, is to place himself in the position of an Elizabethan, and to produce the plays as Shakespeare would produce them today with the aid of modern stage-craft. Mr. Masefield's book *William Shakespeare* (1911) is valuable, though, like much of his poetry, a curious mixture of toughness and sentiment. Mr. T. S. Eliot (*The Sacred Wood*, 1920) is one of the most stimulating and original of English critics, and 'stimulating' is the right word to apply to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's very readable *Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1918). *The Approach to Shakespeare* (1930), by J. W. Mackail, another disintegrator, is a rounded study of Shakespeare's development, made possible by Furnivall's research: 'he becomes solid and continuous: the planes come out, the lines of growth tell, the methods manifest themselves'. Dr. Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1933) is an original and fascinating approach to Shakespeare. It is, she maintains, through his imagery that a poet, to some extent unconsciously, reveals himself, and she shows how Shakespeare's images are drawn largely from nature and animals. Not only this, but in most of the plays there is a symbolic imagery which gives atmosphere and background, while in each tragedy there is a peculiar and dominating image running through it, sustaining and emphasising the emotion and interpreting the thought. Finally, one of the best short books ever written about Shakespeare is Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith's *On Reading Shakespeare* (1933). 'I am not a Shakespeare scholar', he begins with disarming modesty, and after adducing admirable reasons why we should not read Shakespeare he goes on in his incomparable prose and with luminous humour and urbanity to adduce still more admirable reasons why we must read Shakespeare, and read him again and again, until finally he confesses that 'if lingering too long to listen, spell-bound, to this voice, I too have lost my reason, it is not amid the shouting theorists that you shall find me, but babbling, among the imbecile adorers, my praise'.

CHAPTER IX

SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

ROBERT GREENE. (*Groats-worth of Wit.* Sept., 1592. The reference is to 3 *Henry VI*, and Greene parodies the line in that play, 'Oh Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide'.)

There is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.

HENRY CHETTLE. (*Epistle* to *Kind-Harts Dreama.* Dec. 1592. Chettle apologises, apparently to Shakespeare, for the part he had taken in preparing Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* for the press.)

I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that aprooues his Art.

FRANCIS MERES. (*Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury.* Sept. 1598. Meres was a Cambridge man; he was in London 1597-8, and later rector and schoolmaster at Wing, Rutland.)

As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to liue in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* liues in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c.

As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice*; for Tragedy his *Richard the* 2, *Richard the* 3, *Henry the* 4, *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Iuliet*.

As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

RICHARD BARNFIELD. (*Poems in Divers Humors.* 1598.)

> And *Shakespeare* thou, whose hony-flowing Vaine,
> (Pleasing the World) thy Praises doth obtaine.
> Whose *Venus*, and whose *Lucrece* (sweete, and chaste)
> Thy Name in fames immortall Booke haue plac't.
> Liue euer you, at least in Fame liue euer:
> Well may the Bodye dye, but Fame dies neuer.

JOHN WEEVER. (*Epigrammes in the oldest Cut, and newest Fashion.* 1599.)

> Honie-tong'd *Shakespeare* when I saw thine issue
> I swore *Apollo* got them and none other,
> Their rosie-tainted features cloth'd in tissue,
> Some heauen born goddesse said to be their mother:
> Rose-checkt *Adonis* with his amber tresses,
> Faire fire-hot *Venus* charming him to loue her,
> Chaste *Lucretia* virgine-like her dresses,
> Prowd lust-strung *Tarquine* seeking still to proue her:
> *Romea Richard*; more whose names I know not,
> Their sugred tongues, and power attractiue beuty
> Say they are Saints althogh that Sts they shew not
> For thousands vowes to them subiectiue dutie:
> They burn in loue thy children *Shakespear* het them,
> Go, wo thy Muse more Nymphish brood beget them.

ANON. (*Parnassus.* A series of three plays performed at Cambridge, probably at Christmas 1598, 1599, 1601. *a.* from 2 *Parnassus; b.* from 3.)

a. *Gull.* Not in a vaine veine (prettie, i' faith!): make mee them in two or three divers vayns, in Chaucer's, Gower's and Spencer's and Mr. Shakspeare's. Marry, I thinke I shall entertaine those verses which run like these;

> Even as the sunn with purple coloured face
> Had tane his last leave on the weeping morne, &c.

O sweet Mr. Shakspeare! I'le have his picture in my study at the courte. . . .

Let this duncified worlde esteem of Spencer and Chaucer, I'le worshipp sweet Mr. Shakspeare, and to honour him will lay his Venus and Adonis under my pillowe, as we reade of one . . . slept with Homer under his bed's heade.

b. *Kempe.* Few of the vniuersity men pen plaies well, they smell too much of that writer *Ouid*, and that writer *Metamorphosis*, and talke too much of *Proserpina & Iuppiter*. Why heres our fellow *Shakespeare* puts

them all downe, I and *Ben Ionson* too. O that *Ben Ionson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought vp *Horace* giuing the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath giuen him a purge that made him beray his credit:

Burbage. Its a shrewd fellow indeed.

GABRIEL HARVEY. (*Marginalia.* 1601?)

The younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeares Venus, & Adonis: but his Lucrece, & his tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, haue it in them, to please the wiser sort.

ANTHONY SCOLOKER. (*Epistle* to *Daiphantus.* 1604.)

It should be like the *Neuer-too-well* read *Arcadia*, where the *Prose* and *Verce* (*Matter* and *Words*) are like his *Mistresses* eyes, one still excelling another and without Coriuall: or to come home to the vulgars *Element*, like *Friendly Shakespeare's Tragedies*, where the *Commedian* rides, when the *Tragedian* stands on Tip-toe: Faith it should please all, like Prince *Hamlet*.

JOHN WEBSTER. (*Epistle* to *The White Devil.* 1612.)

And lastly (without wrong last to be named), the right happy and copious industry of M. *Shake-speare*, M. *Decker*, & M. *Heywood*, wishing what I write may be read by their light: Protesting, that, in the strength of mine owne iudgement, I know them so worthy, that though I rest silent in my owne worke, yet to most of theirs I dare (without flattery) fix that of *Martiall*,

Non norunt, Haec monumenta mori.

THOMAS FREEMAN. (*Runne and a Great Cast.* 1614.)

Shakespeare, that nimble *Mercury* thy braine,
Lulls many hundred *Argus*-eyes asleepe,
So fit, for all thou fashionest thy vaine,
At th' *horse-foote* fountaine thou hast drunk full deepe,
Vertues or vices theame to thee all one is:
Who loues chaste life, there's *Lucrece* for a Teacher:
Who list read lust there's *Venus* and *Adonis*,
True modell of a most lasciuious leatcher.
Besides in plaies thy wit windes like *Meander*:
Whence needy new-composers borrow more
Than *Terence* doth from *Plautus* or *Menander*.
But to praise thee aright I want thy store:
Then let thine owne works thine owne worth upraise,
And help t' adorne thee with deserued Baies.

WILLIAM BASSE. (c. 1620.)

On Mr. Wm. Shakespeare
he dyed in Aprill 1616.

Renowned Spencer, lye a thought more nye
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lye
A little neerer Spenser to make roome
For Shakespeare in your threefold fowerfold Tombe.
To lodge all fowre in one bed make a shift
Vntill Doomesdaye, for hardly will a fift
Betwixt this day and that by Fate be slayne
For whom your Curtaines may be drawn againe.
If your precedency in death doth barre
A fourth place in your sacred sepulcher,
Vnder this carved marble of thine owne
Sleepe rare Tragœdian Shakespeare, sleep alone,
Thy vnmolested peace, vnshared Caue,
Possesse as Lord not Tenant of thy Grave,
That vnto us and others it may be
Honor hereafter to be layde by thee.

BEN JONSON. (*a.* From *Conversations with William Drummond.* 1618-19. These notes by Drummond on his talks with Jonson, who set out to see him at Hawthornden in the summer of 1618.

b. Verses on the fifth preliminary leaf to F1, 1623. Jonson is one of the 'Friends and guides' referred to by Heminge and Condell.

c. From *Timber: or Discoveries.* Probably written after 1630 when Jonson was 'prest by extremities', and struggling with want and disease 'for breath'.)

a. His Censure of the English Poets was this . . .
That Shaksperr wanted Arte.

b.

To the memory of my beloued
The Avthor
Mr. William Shakespeare:
And
what he hath left vs.

To draw no enuy (Shakespeare) *on thy name,*
Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame:
While I confesse thy writings to be such,
As neither Man, *nor* Muse, *can praise too much*
'Tis true, and all mens suffrage. But these wayes

Were not the paths I meant vnto thy praise:
For seeliest Ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but eccho's right;
Or blinde Affection, which doth ne're aduance
The truth, but gropes, and vrgeth all by chance;
Of crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,
And thinke to ruine, where it seem'd to raise.
These are, as some infamous Baud, or Whore,
Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more?
But thou art proofe against them, and indeed
Aboue th'ill fortune of them, or the need.
I, therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, *rise; I will not lodge thee by*
Chaucer, *or* Spenser, *or bid* Beaumont *lye*
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Moniment, without a tombe,
And art aliue still, while thy Booke doth liue,
And we haue wits to read, and praise to giue.
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses;
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses:
For, if I thought my iudgement were of yeeres,
I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
And tell, how farre thou didst our Lily *out-shine,*
Or *sporting* Kid, *or* Marlowes *mighty line.*
And though thou hadst small Latine, *and less* Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke
For names; but call forth thund'ring Æschilus,
Euripides, *and* Sophocles *to us,*
Paccuuius, Accius, *him of* Cordoua *dead,*
To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
And shake a Stage: Or, *when thy Sockes were on,*
Leaue thee alone, for the comparison
Of all, that insolent Greece, *or haughtie* Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britaine, *thou hast one to showe,*
To whom all scenes of Europe *homage owe.*
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses *still were in their prime,*
When like Apollo *he came forth to warme*
Our eares, or like a Mercury *to charme!*
Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,
And ioy'd to weare the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and wouen so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.
The merry Greeke, *tart* Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, *witty* Plautus, *now not please;*

But antiquated, and deserted lye
As they were not of Natures family.
Yet must I not giue Nature all: Thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enioy a part.
For though the Poets *matter, Nature be,*
His Art doth giue the fashion. And, that he,
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(*Such as thine are*) *and strike the second heat*
Vpon the Muses anuile: turne the same,
(*And himselfe with it*) *that he thinkes to frame;*
Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne,
For such a good Poet's *made, as well as borne.*
And such wert thou. Looke how the fathers face
Liues in his issue, euen so, the race
Of Shakespeares *minde, and manners brightly shines*
In his well torned, and true-filed lines:
In each of which, he seems to shake a Lance,
As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Auon! *what a sight it were*
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights vpon the bankes of Thames,
That so did take Eliza *and our* Iames!
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Aduanc'd, and made a Constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, *and with rage,*
Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage;
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despaires day, but for thy Volumes light.

c. I *remember*, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to *Shakespeare*, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justifie mine own candor, (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory (on this side Idolatry) as much as any.) Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent *Phantsie*; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd: *Sufflimandus erat:* as *Augustus* said of *Haterius*. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him: *Cæsar thou dost me wrong.* He replyed: *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause* and such like: which were ridiculous. But hee redeemed his vices with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be praysed, then to be pardoned.

JOHN HEMINGE AND HENRY CONDELL. (The editors of the First Folio, 1623. *To the great Variety of Readers.*)

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to haue been wished, that the Author himselfe had liu'd to haue set forth, and ouerseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to haue collected & publish'd them; and so to haue publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them. Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our prouince, who onely gather his works, and giue them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your diuers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, then it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to vnderstand him. And so we leaue you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides: if you neede them not, you can leade your selues, and others. And such Readers we wish him.

HUGH HOLLAND. (From sixth preliminary leaf to F1, 1623. *Vpon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenicke Poet, Master William Shakespeare.*)

Those hands, which you so clapt, go now, and wring
You *Britaines* braue; for done are *Shakespeares* dayes:
His dayes are done, that made the dainty Playes,
Which made the Globe of heau'n and earth to ring.
Dry'de is that veine, dry'd is the *Thespian* Spring,
Turn'd all to teares, and *Phœbus* clouds his rayes:
That corp's, that coffin now besticke those bayes,
Which crown'd him *Poet* first, then *Poets* King.
If *Tragedies* might any *Prologue* haue,
All those he made, would scarse make one to this:
Where *Fame*, now that he gone is to the graue
(Deaths publique tyring-house) the *Nuncius* is.
For though his line of life went soone about,
The life yet of his lines shall neuer out.

LEONARD DIGGES. (From eighth preliminary leaf to F1, 1623. *To the Memorie of the deceased Author Maister W. Shakespeare.*)

Shake-speare, at length thy pious fellowes giue
The world thy Workes: thy Workes, by which, out-liue
Thy Tombe, thy name must: when that stone is rent,
And Time dissolues thy Stratford Moniment,
Here we aliue shall view thee still. This Booke,
When Brasse and Marble fade, shall make thee looke
Fresh to all Ages: when Posteritie
Shall loath what's new, thinke all is prodegie
That is not *Shake-speares*; eu'ry Line, each Verse,
Here shall reuiue, redeeme thee from thy Herse.
Nor Fire, nor cankring Age, as *Naso* said,
Of his, thy wit-fraught Booke shall once inuade.
Nor shall I e're beleeue, or thinke thee dead
(Though mist) untill our bankrout Stage be sped
(Impossible) with some new strain t' out-do
Passions of *Iuliet*, and her *Romeo*;
Or till I heare a Scene more nobly take,
Then when thy half-Sword parlying *Romans* spake,
Till these, till any of thy Volumes rest
Shall with more fire, more feeling be exprest,
Be sure, our *Shake-speare*, thou canst neuer dye,
But crown'd with Lawrell, liue eternally.

MICHAEL DRAYTON. (From *Elegy to Henry Reynolds*. 1627.)

And be it said of thee,
Shakespeare, thou hadst as smooth a Comicke vaine,
Fitting the socke, and in thy naturall braine,
As strong conception, and as Cleere a rage,
As any one that trafiqu'd with the stage.

JOHN MILTON. (Published in prefatory matter to the Second Folio, 1632. This was the first of Milton's poems to be published.)

On *Shakespear*, 1630.

What needs my *Shakespear* for his honour'd Bones,
The labour of an age in piled Stones,
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a Star-ypointing *Pyramid*?
Dear son of memory, great heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment

Hast built thy self a live-long Monument.
For whilst toth' shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easie numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalu'd Book,
Those Delphick lines with deep impression took,
Then thou our fancy of it self bereaving,
Dost make us Marble with too much conceaving;
And so Sepulcher'd in such pomp dost lie,
That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.

THOMAS HEYWOOD. (From *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels.* 1635.)

Our moderne Poets to that passe are driuen,
Those names are curtal'd which they first had giuen;
And, as we wisht to haue their memories drown'd,
We scarcely can afford them halfe their sound. . . .
Mellifluous *Shake-speare*, whose inchanting Quill
Commanded Mirth or Passion, was but *Will.*

LEONARD DIGGES. (Published in John Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*, 1640.)

Poets are borne not made, when I would prove
This truth, the glad rememberance I must love
Of never dying *Shakespeare*, who alone,
Is argument enough to make that one.
First, that he was a Poet none would doubt,
That heard th'applause of what he sees set out
Imprinted; where thou hast (I will not say)
Reader his Workes (for to contrive a Play
To him twas none) the patterne of all wit,
Art without Art unparaleld as yet.
Next Nature onely helpt him, for looke thorow
This whole Booke, thou shalt find he doth not borrow,
One phrase from Greekes, nor Latines imitate,
Nor once from vulgar Languages Translate,
Nor Plagiari-like from others gleane,
Nor begs he from each witty friend a Scene
To peece his Acts with, all that he doth write,
Is pure his owne, plot, language exquisite,
But oh! what praise more powerfull can we give
The dead, than that by him the Kings men live,
His Players, which should they but have shar'd the Fate,
All else expir'd within the short Termes date;
How could the Globe have prospered, since through want

Of change, the Plaies and Poems had growne scant.
But happy Verse thou shalt be sung and heard,
When hungry quills shall be such honour bard.
Then vanish upstart Writers to each Stage,
You needy Poetasters of this Age,
Where *Shakespeare* liv'd or spake, Vermine forbeare,
Least with your froth you spot them, come not neere;
But if you needs must write, if poverty
So pinch, that otherwise you starve and die,
On Gods name may the Bull or Cockpit have
Your lame blancke Verse, to keepe you from the grave:
Or let new Fortunes younger brethren see,
What they can picke from your leane industry.
I doe not wonder when you offer at
Blacke-Friers, that you suffer: tis the fate
Of richer veines, prime judgments that have far'd
The worse, with this deceased man compar'd.
So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,
And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,
Brutus and *Cassius*: oh how the Audience,
Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence,
When some new day they would not brooke a line,
Of tedious (though well laboured) *Catilines*;
Sejanus too was irkesome, they priz'de more
Honest *Iago*, or the jealous Moore.
And though the Fox and subtill Alchimist,
Long intermitted could not quite be mist,
Though these have sham'd all the Ancients, and might raise,
Their Authors merit with a crowne of Bayes.
Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire
Acted, have scarce defraid the Seacoale fire
And doore-keepers: when let but *Falstaffe* come,
Hall, *Poines*, the rest you scarce shall have a roome
All is so pester'd: let but *Beatrice*
And *Benedicke* be seene, loe in a trice
The Cockpit Galleries, Boxes, all are full
To heare *Maluoglio* that crosse garter's Gull.
Briefe, there is nothing in his wit fraught Booke,
Whose sound we would not heare, on whose worth looke
Like old coynd gold, whose lines in every page,
Shall pass true currant to succeeding age.
But why doe I dead *Shakspeares* praise recite,
Some second *Shakespeare* must of *Shakespeare* write;
For me tis needlesse, since an host of men,
Will pay to clap his praise, to free my Pen.

LATER SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CRITICISM

THOMAS FULLER. (From *Worthies, Warwickshire.* 1662. Fuller [1608-1661] began collecting materials for his *Worthies*, possibly as early as 1643.)

William Shakespeare was born at *Stratford* on *Avon* in this Country, in whom three eminent Poets may seem in some sort to be compounded.

1. *Martial* in the *Warlike* sound of his Sur-name (whence some may conjecture him of a *Military extraction*), *Hasti-vibrans*, or *Shake-speare*.

2. *Ovid*, the most *naturall* and *witty* of all Poets, and hence it was that Queen *Elizabeth*, coming into a Grammar-School, made this extemporary verse,

'*Persius* a Crab-staffe, Bawdy *Martial*,
Ovid a fine Wag.'

3. *Plautus*, who was an exact Comaedian, yet never any Scholar, as our *Shake-speare* (if alive) would confess himself. Adde to all these, that though his genius generally was *jocular*, and inclining him to *festivity*, yet he could (when so disposed) be *solemn* and *serious*, as appears by his Tragedies, so that *Heraclitus* himself (I mean if secret and unseen) might afford to smile at his Comedies, they were so *merry*, and *Democritus* scarce borbear to sigh at his Tragedies they were so *mournfull*.

He was an eminent instance of the truth of that Rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur*, one is not *made*, but *born* a Poet. Indeed his Learning was very little, so that as *Cornish diamonds* are not polished by any Lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the Earth, so *nature* it self was all the *art* which was used upon him.

MARGARET CAVENDISH, Duchess of Newcastle. (*Letter CXXIII*, 1664.)

MADAM,

I Wonder how that Person you mention in your Letter, could either have the Conscience, or Confidence to Dispraise *Shakespear's* Playes, as to say they were made up onely with Clowns, Fools, Watchmen, and the like; . . .

Shakespear did not want Wit, to Express to the Life all Sorts of Persons, of what Quality, Profession, Degree, Breeding, or Birth soever; nor did he want Wit to Express the Divers, and Different Humours, or Natures, or Several Passions in Mankind; and so Well he hath Express'd in his Playes all Sorts of Persons, as one would think he had been Transformed into every one of those Persons he hath Described; and as sometimes one would think he was really himself the Clown or Jester he Feigns, so one would think, he was also the King, and Privy Counsellor; also as one would think he were Really the Coward he Feigns, so one would think he were the most Valiant, and Experienced Souldier; Who would not think he had been such a man

as his Sir *John Falstaff*? and who would not think he had been *Harry* the Fifth? & certainly *Julius Caesar*, *Augustus Caesar*, and *Antonius*, did never Really Act their parts Better, if so Well, as he hath Described them, and I believe that *Antonius* and *Brutus* did not Speak Better to the People, than he hath Feign'd them; nay, one would think that he had been Metamorphosed from a Man to a Woman, for who could Describe *Cleopatra* Better than he hath done, and many other Females of his own Creating, as *Nan Page*, Mrs. *Page*, Mrs. *Ford*, the Doctors Maid, *Bettrice*, Mrs. *Quickly*, *Doll Tear-sheet*, and others, too many to Relate? and in his Tragick Vein, he Presents Passions so Naturally, and Misfortunes so Probably, as he Peirces the Souls of his Readers with such a true Sense and Feeling thereof, that it Forces Tears through their Eyes, and almost Perswades them, they are Really Actors, or at least Present at those Tragedies. Who would not Swear he had been a Noble Lover, that could Woo so well? and there is not any person he hath Described in his Book, but his Readers might think they were Well acquainted with them; indeed *Shakespear* had a Clear Judgment, a Quick Wit, a Spreading Fancy, a Subtil Observation, a Deep Apprehension, and a most Eloquent Elocution; truly, he was a Natural Orator, as well as a Natural Poet, and he was not an Orator to Speak Well only on some Subjects, as Lawyers, who can make Eloquent Orations at the Bar, and Plead Subtilly and Wittily in Law-Cases, or Divines, that can Preach Eloquent Sermons, or Dispute Subtilly and Wittily in Theology, but take them from that, and put them to other Subjects, and they will be to seek; but *Shakespear*'s Wit and Eloquence was General, for, and upon all Subjects, he rather wanted Subjects for his Wit and Eloquence to Work on, for which he was Forced to take some of his Plots out of History, where he only took the Bare Designs, the Wit and Language being all his Own; and so much he had above others, that those, who Writ after him, were Forced to Borrow of him, or rather to Steal from him.

DRYDEN. (a. *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie.* 1668. b. *Essay on the Dramatique Poetry of the Last Age.* 1672. c. *Preface to Troilus and Cressida, or Truth found too late.* 1679.)

a. To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some occasion is presented to him; no man can

say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eaton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him. . . .

If I would compare Jonson with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare.

b. But, malice and partiality set apart, let any man, who understands English, read diligently the works of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and I dare undertake, that he will find in every page either some solecism of speech, or some notorious flaw in sense; and yet these men are reverenced, when we are not forgiven. That their wit is great, and many times their expressions noble, envy itself cannot deny. But the times were ignorant in which they lived. Poetry was then, if not in its infancy among us, at least not arrived to its vigour and maturity: witness the lameness of their plots; many of which, especially those which they writ first (for even that age refined itself in some measure), were made up of some ridiculous incoherent story, which in one play many times took up the business of an age. I suppose I need not name *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, nor the historical plays of Shakespeare: besides many of the rest, as the *Winter's Tale, Love's Labour Lost, Measure for Measure*, which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment. . . .

Shakespeare, who many times has written better than any poet, in any language, is yet so far from writing wit always, or expressing that wit according to the dignity of the subject, that he writes, in many places, below the dullest writer of ours, or any precedent age. Never did any author precipitate himself from such height of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. He is the very Janus of poets; he wears almost everywhere two faces; and you have scarce begun to admire the one, ere you despise the other.

c. If Shakespeare be allowed, as I think he must, to have made his characters distinct, it will easily be inferred that he understood the nature of the passions: because it has been proved already that confused passions make undistinguishable characters: yet I cannot deny that he has his failings; but they are not so much in the passions themselves, as in his manner of ex-

pression: he often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible. I will not say of so great a poet, that he distinguished not the blown puffy style from true sublimity; but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgment, either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis. It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks 'em necessary to raise it: but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin. I must be forced to give an example of expressing passion figuratively; but that I may do it with respect to Shakespeare, it shall not be taken from anything of his: 'tis an exclamation against Fortune, quoted in his *Hamlet* but written by some other poet[1]—

> Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! all you gods,
> In general synod, take away her power;
> Break all the spokes and felleys from her wheel,
> And bowl the round nave down the hill of Heav'n,
> As low as to the fiends.

And immediately after, speaking of Hecuba, when Priam was killed before her eyes—

> The mobbled queen
> Threatning the flame, ran up and down
> With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
> Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe,
> About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
> A blanket in th'alarm of fear caught up.
> Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
> 'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
> But if the gods themselves did see her then,
> When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
> In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
> The instant burst of clamour that she made
> (Unless things mortal move them not at all)
> Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
> And passion in the gods.

What a pudder is here kept in raising the expression of trifling thoughts! Would not a man have thought that the poet had been bound prentice to a wheelwright, for his first rant? and had followed a ragman, for the clout and blanket in the second? Fortune is painted on a wheel, and therefore the writer, in a rage, will have poetical justice done upon every member of that engine: after this execution, he bowls the nave down-hill, from Heaven, to the fiends (an unreasonable long mark, a man would think); 'tis well there are no solid orbs to stop it in the way, or no element of fire to consume it:

[1] Dryden was probably wrong here. As far as we know Shakespeare wrote the passage, but in the earlier rhetorical style of Marlowe as a contrast to his own verse in *Hamlet*.

but when it came to the earth, it must be monstrous heavy, to break ground as low as the centre. His making milch the burning eyes of heaven was a pretty tolerable flight too: and I think no man ever drew milk out of eyes before him: yet, to make the wonder greater, these eyes were burning. Such a sight indeed were enough to have raised passion in the gods; but to excuse the effects of it, he tells you, perhaps they did not see it. Wise men would be glad to find a little sense couched under all these pompous words; for bombast is commonly the delight of that audience which loves Poetry, but understands it not: and as commonly has been the practice of those writers, who, not being able to infuse a natural passion into the mind, have made it their business to ply the ears, and to stun their judges by the noise.

But Shakespeare does not often thus; for the passions in his scene between Brutus and Cassius are extremely natural, the thoughts are such as arise from the matter, the expression of 'em not viciously figurative. I cannot leave this subject, before I do justice to that divine poet, by giving you one of his passionate descriptions: 'tis of Richard the Second when he was deposed, and led in triumph through the streets of London by Henry of Bullingbrook: the painting of it is so lively, and the words so moving, that I have scarce read anything comparable to it in any other language. Suppose you have seen already the fortunate usurper passing through the crowd, and followed by the shouts and acclamations of the people; and now behold King Richard entering upon the scene: consider the wretchedness of his condition, and his carriage in it; and refrain from pity if you can—

> As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
> After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
> Are idly bent on him that enters next,
> Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
> Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
> Did scowl on Richard: no man cried, God save him:
> No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home.
> But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
> Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
> His face still combating with tears and smiles
> (The badges of his grief and patience),
> That had not God (for some strong purpose) steel'd
> The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
> And barbarism itself have pitied him.

To speak justly of this whole matter: 'tis neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetic vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place; but 'tis a false measure of all these, something which is like them; 'tis the Bristol-stone, which appears like a diamond; 'tis an extravagant thought, instead of a sublime one; 'tis roaring madness, instead of vehemence; and a sound of words instead of sense. If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombasts in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot: but I fear

(at least let me fear it for myself) that we, who ape his sounding words, have nothing of his thought, but are all outside; there is not so much as a dwarf within our giant's clothes. Therefore, let not Shakespeare suffer for our sakes; 'tis our fault, who succeed him in an age which is more refined, if we imitate him so ill, that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our writings which in him was an imperfection.

For what remains, the excellency of that poet was, as I have said, in the more manly passions; Fletcher's in the softer: Shakespeare writ better betwixt man and man; Fletcher betwixt man and woman: consequently, the one described friendship better; the other love: yet Shakespeare taught Fletcher to write love: and Juliet and Desdemona are originals. 'Tis true, the scholar had the softer soul; but the master had the kinder. Friendship is both a virtue and a passion essentially; love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by accident: good nature makes friendship; but effeminacy love. Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions; Fletcher a more confined and limited: for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly. To conclude all, he was a limb of Shakespeare.

EDWARD PHILLIPS. (*Theatrum Poetarum*. 1675. Phillips was Milton's nephew.)

Shakespear, in spite of all his unfiled expressions, his rambling and indigested Fancys, the laughter of the *Critical*, yet must be confess't a *Poet* above many that go beyond him in Literature some degrees. . . .

William Shakespear, the Glory of the English Stage; whose nativity at *Stratford* upon *Avon*, is the highest honour that Town can boast of: from an Actor of Tragedies and Comedies, he became a *Maker*; and such a Maker, that though some others may perhaps pretend to a more exact *Decorum* and *œconomie*, especially in Tragedy, never any express't a more lofty and Tragic heighth; never any represented nature more purely to the life, and where the polishments of Art are most wanting, as probably his Learning was not extraordinary, he pleaseth with a certain wild and native Elegance; and in all his Writings hath an unvulgar style, as well in his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Rape of Lucrece* and other various Poems, as in his Dramatics.

THOMAS RYMER. (*A Short View of Tragedy*. 1693.)

What Reformation may not we expect now, that in *France* they see the necessity of a *Chorus* to their Tragedies? *Boyer*, and *Racine*, both of the Royal Academy, have led the Dance; they have tried the success in the last Plays that were Presented by them.

The *Chorus* was the root and original, and is certainly always the most necessary part of Tragedy.

The *Spectators* thereby are secured, that their Poet shall not juggle, or put upon them in the matter of *Place*, and *Time*, other than is just and reasonable for the representation.

And the *Poet* has this benefit; the *Chorus* is a goodly *Show*, so that he need not ramble from his Subject out of his Wits for some foreign Toy or Hobby-horse, to humor the multitude. . . .

Gorboduck is a fable, doubtless, better turn'd for Tragedy, than any on this side the *Alps* in his time; and might have been a better direction to *Shakespear* and *Ben. Johnson* than any guide they have had the luck to follow.

It is objected by our Neighbours against the English, that we delight in bloody spectacles. Our Poets who have not imitated *Gorboduck* in the regularity and roundness of the design, have not failed on the Theatre to give us the *atrocité* and blood enough in all Conscience. From this time Dramatick Poetry began to thrive with us, and flourish wonderfully. The French confess they had nothing in this kind considerable till 1635, that the Academy Royal was founded. Long before which time we had from *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Ben. Johnson* whole Volumes; at this day in possession of the Stage, and acted with greater applause than ever. Yet after all, I fear what *Quintilian* pronounced concerning the Roman Comedy, may as justly be said of English Tragedy: In Tragedy we come short extreamly; hardly have we a slender shadow of it. . . .

Shakespears genius lay for Comedy and Humour. In Tragedy he appears quite out of his Element; his Brains are turn'd, he raves and rambles, without any coherence, any spark of reason, or any rule to controul him, or set bounds to his phrenzy. His imagination was still running after his Masters, the Coblers, and Parish Clerks, and *Old Testament Stroulers*. So he might make bold with *Portia*, as they had done with the Virgin Mary. Who, in a Church Acting their Play call'd *The Incarnation*, had usually the *Ave Mary* mumbl'd over to a stradling wench (for the blessed Virgin) straw-hatted, blew-apron'd, big-bellied, with her Immaculate Conception up to her chin.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CRITICISM

NICHOLAS ROWE. (*Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare. 1709.)

His plays are properly to be distinguished only into Comedies and Tragedies. Those which are called Histories, and even some of his Comedies, are really Tragedies, with a run or Mixture of Comedy amongst 'em. The way of Tragi-Comedy was the common mistake of that age, and is indeed become so agreeable to the English taste, that tho' the severer critics among us cannot bear it, yet the generality of our audiences seem to be better pleased with it than with an exact Tragedy. . . .

The style of his Comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and easy in itself; and the wit most commonly sprightly and pleasing, except in those places where he runs into dogrel rhymes, as in the *Comedy of Errors*, and a

passage or two in some other plays. As for his jingling sometimes, and playing upon words, it was the common vice of the age he lived in: and if we find it in the pulpit, perhaps it may not be thought too light for the stage.

But certainly the greatness of this author's Genius does no where so much appear, as where he gives his imagination an entire loose, and raises his fancy to a flight above mankind and the limits of the visible world. Such are his attempts in *The Tempest*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*....

If one undertook to examine the greatest part of these (the Tragedies) by those rules which are established by Aristotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian stage, it would be no very hard task to find a great many faults: but as Shakespeare lived under a kind of mere Light of Nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of those written precepts, so it would be hard to judge him by a law he knew nothing of. We are to consider him as a man that lived in a state of almost universal license and ignorance: there was no established judge, but everyone took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one considers, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the present stage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder that he should advance dramatic poetry as far as he did.

ADDISON. (*The Spectator*, 592. 1714.)

Our critics do not seem sensible that there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them.... Our inimitable Shakespeare is a stumbling-block to the whole tribe of these rigid critics. Who would not rather read one of his plays, where there is not a single rule of the stage observed, than any production of a modern critic, where there is not one of them violated? Shakespear was indeed born with all the seeds of poetry, and may be compared to the stone in Pyrrhus's ring, which, as Pliny tells us, had the figure of Apollo and the Nine Muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of Nature, without any help from Art.

POPE. (a. *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare. 1725. b. *Epistle to Augustus*. 1737.)

a. If ever any author deserved the name of an *Original*, it was Shakespear. ... The poetry of Shakespear was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks thro' him.

His *Characters* are so much Nature her self, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture like a mock-rainbow is but the reflexion of a reflexion. But every single character in Shakespear

is as much an individual, as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.

The *Power* over our *Passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead towards it: but the heart swells, and the tears burst out, just at the proper places: we are surprised, the moment we weep; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, Laughter and Spleen, are no less at his command! that he is not more a master of the *Great*, than of the *Ridiculous* in human nature; of our noblest tendernesses, than of our vainest foibles; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations!

Nor does he only excel in the Passions: in the coolness of Reflection and Reasoning he is full as admirable. His *Sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject; but by a talent very peculiar, something between Penetration and Felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and public scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts: so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion, that the Philosopher and even the Man of the world, may be *Born*, as well as the Poet.

It must be owned that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. . . .

Not only the common audience had no notion of the rules of writing, but few even of the better sort piqued themselves upon any great degree of knowledge or nicety that way. . . . To judge therefore of Shakespear by Aristotle's rules, is like trying a man by the laws of one country, who acted under those of another. He writ to the *People*; and writ at first without patronage from the better sort, and therefore without aims of pleasing them: without assistance or advice from the learned, as without the advantage of education or acquaintance among them; without that knowledge of the best models, the Ancients, to inspire him with an emulation of them; in a word, without any views of reputation, and of what poets are pleased to call immortality.

Yet it must be observed, that when his performances had merited the protection of his Prince, and when the encouragement of the Court had succeeded to that of the Town; the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former. The dates of his plays sufficiently evidence that his productions improved, in proportion to the respect he had for his auditors. . . .

Another cause (and no less strong than the former) may be deduced from our author's being a player, and forming himself first upon the judgments of that body of men whereof he was a member. They have ever had a standard to themselves, upon other principles than those of Aristotle. As they live by the majority, they know no rule but that of pleasing the present humour, and complying with the wit in fashion; a consideration which brings all their judgment to a short point. Players are just such judges of what is *right*, as taylors are of what is *graceful*. And in this view it will be but fair to allow, that most of our author's faults are less to be ascribed to his wrong judgment as a Poet, than to his right judgment as a Player. . . .

As to a wrong choice of the subject, a wrong conduct of the incidents, false thoughts, forced expressions, &c. if these are not to be ascribed to the foresaid accidental reasons, they must be charged upon the poet himself, and there is no help for it. But I think the two disadvantages which I have mentioned (to be obliged to please the lowest of people, and to keep the worst of company) if the consideration be extended as far as it reasonably may, will appear sufficient to mis-lead and depress the greatest genius upon earth.

But as to his *Want of Learning*, it may be necessary to say something more: there is certainly a vast difference between *Learning* and *Languages*. How far he was ignorant of the latter, I cannot determine; but 'tis plain he had much Reading at least, if they will not call it Learning. Nor is it any great matter, if a man has Knowledge, whether he has it from one language or from another. . . .

I am inclined to think this opinion proceeded originally from the zeal of the partisans of our author and Ben Jonson; as they endeavoured to exalt the one at the expense of the other. It is ever the nature of parties to be in extremes; and nothing is so probable, as that because Ben Jonson had much the most learning, it was said on the one hand that Shakespear had none at all; and because Shakespear had much the most wit and fancy, it was retorted on the other, that Jonson wanted both. . . .

I will conclude by saying of Shakespear, that with all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *Drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestic piece of *Gothic* architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed, that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; tho' we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the Whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, tho' many of the Parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.

avec un grand succès. Le temps, qui seul fait la réputation des hommes, rend à la fin leurs défauts respectables. La plupart des idées bizarres et gigantesques de cet auteur ont acquis au bout de deux cents ans le droit de passer pour sublimes; les auteurs modernes l'ont presque tous copié; mais ce qui réussissait chez Shakespeare est sifflé chez eux, et vous croyez bien que la vénération qu'on a pour cet ancien augmente à mesure que l'on méprise les modernes. On ne fait pas réflexion qu'il ne faudrait pas l'imiter, et le mauvais succès de ses copistes fait seulement qu'on le croit inimitable.

Vous savez que dans la tragédie du *More de Venise*, pièce très touchante, un mari étrangle sa femme sur le théâtre, et quand la pauvre femme est étranglée, elle s'écrie qu'elle meurt très injustement. Vous n'ignorez pas que dans Hamlet des fossoyeurs creusent une fosse en buvant, en chantant des vaudevilles, et en faisant sur les têtes des morts qu'ils rencontrent des plaisanteries convenables à gens de leur métier. Mais ce qui vous surprendra, c'est qu'on a imité ces sottises sous le règne de Charles Second, qui était celui de la politesse et l'âge d'or des beaux-arts.

Otway, dans sa *Venise sauvée*, introduit le Sénateur Antonio et la courtisane Naki au milieu des horreurs de la conspiration du Marquis de Bedmar. Le vieux Sénateur Antonio fait auprès de sa courtisane toutes les singeries d'un vieux débauché impuissant et hors du bon sens; il contrefait le taureau et le chien, il mord les jambes de sa maîtresse, qui lui donne des coups de pied et des coups de fouet. On a retranché de la pièce d'Otway ces bouffonneries, faites pour la plus vile canaille; mais on a laissé dans le *Jules César* de Shakespeare les plaisanteries des cordonniers et des savetiers romains introduits sur la scène avec Brutus et Cassius. C'est que la sottise d'Otway est moderne, et que celle de Shakespeare est ancienne. . . .

C'est dans ces morceaux détachés que les tragiques Anglais ont jusqu'ici excellé; leurs pièces, presque toutes barbares, dépourvues de bienséance, d'ordre, de vraisemblance, ont des lueurs étonnantes au milieu de cette nuit. Le style est trop ampoulé, trop hors de la nature, trop copié des écrivains hébreux si remplis de l'enflure asiatique; mais aussi il faut avouer que les échasses du style figuré, sur lesquelles la langue anglaise est guindée, élèvent aussi l'esprit bien haut, quoique par une marche irrégulière.

Le premier Anglais qui ait fait une pièce raisonnable et écrite d'un bout à l'autre avec élégance est l'illustre M. Addison. Son *Caton d'Utique* est un chef-d'œuvre pour la diction et pour la beauté des vers. Le rôle de Caton est à mon gré fort au-dessus de celui de Cornélie dans le *Pompée* de Corneille; car Caton est grand sans enflure, et Cornélie, qui d'ailleurs n'est pas un personnage nécessaire, vise quelquefois au galimatias. Le Caton de M. Addison me paraît le plus beau personnage qui soit sur aucun théâtre, mais les autres rôles de la pièce n'y répondent pas, et cet ouvrage si bien écrit est défiguré par une intrigue froide d'amour, qui répand sur la pièce une langueur qui la tue.

La coutume d'introduire de l'amour à tort et à travers dans les ouvrages dramatiques passa de Paris à Londres vers l'an 1660 avec nos rubans et nos perruques. Les femmes, qui parent les spectacles, comme ici, ne veulent plus souffrir qu'on leur parle d'autre chose que d'amour. Le sage Addison

eut la molle complaisance de plier la sévérité de son caractère aux mœurs de son temps, et gâta un chef d'œuvre pour avoir voulu plaire.

Depuis lui, les pièces sont devenues plus régulières, le peuple plus difficile, les auteurs plus corrects et moins hardis. J'ai vu des pièces nouvelles fort sages, mais froides. Il semble que les Anglais n'aient été faits jusqu'ici que pour produire des beautés irrégulières. Les monstres brillants de Shakespeare plaisent mille fois plus que la sagesse moderne. Le génie poétique des Anglais ressemble jusqu'à présent à un arbre touffu planté par la nature, jetant au hasard mille rameaux, et croissant inégalement et avec force; il meurt, si vous voulez forcer sa nature et le tailler en arbre des jardins de Marly.

b. Vous avez presque fait accroire à votre nation que je méprise Shakespeare. . . . J'avais dit que son génie était à lui, et que ses fautes étaient à son siècle. C'est une belle nature, mais bien sauvage; nulle régularité, nulle bienséance, nul art, de la bassesse avec de la grandeur, de la bouffonnerie avec du terrible; c'est le chaos de la tragédie, dans lequel il y a cent traits de lumière.

Maurice Morgann. (*On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff.* 1777.)

Yet whatever may be the neglect of some, or the censure of others, there are those, who firmly believe that this wild, this uncultivated Barbarian, has not yet obtained one half of his fame; and who trust that some new Stagyrite will arise, who instead of pecking at the surface of things will enter into the inward soul of his compositions, and expel by the force of congenial feelings, those foreign impurities which have stained and disgraced his page. And as to those *spots* which will still remain, they may perhaps become invisible to those who shall seek them through the medium of his beauties, instead of looking for those beauties, as is too frequently done, through the smoke of some real or imputed obscurity. When the hand of time shall have brushed off his present Editors and Commentators, and when the very name of *Voltaire*, and even the memory of the language in which he has written, shall be no more, the *Apalachian* mountains, the banks of the *Ohio*, and the plains of *Sciota* shall resound with the accents of this Barbarian: in his native tongue he shall roll the genuine passions of nature; nor shall the griefs of *Lear* be alleviated, or the charms and wit of *Rosalind* be abated by time. There is indeed nothing perishable about him, except that very learning which he is said so much to want. He had not, it is true, enough for the demands of the age in which he lived, but he had perhaps too much for the reach of his genius, and the interest of his fame. *Milton* and he will carry the decayed remnants and fripperies of ancient mythology into more distant ages than they are by their own force intitled to extend; and the metamorphoses of *Ovid*, upheld by them, lay in a new claim to unmerited immortality.

Shakespeare is a name so interesting, that it is excusable to stop a moment,

nay it would be indecent to pass him without the tribute of some admiration. He differs essentially from all other writers: him we may profess rather to feel than to understand; and it is safer to say, on many occasions, that we are possessed by him, than that we possess him. And no wonder;—he scatters the seeds of things, the principles of character and action, with so cunning a hand yet with so careless an air, and, master of our feelings, submits himself so little to our judgment, that every thing seems superior. We discern not his course, we see no connection of cause and effect, we are rapt in ignorant admiration, and claim no kindred with his abilities. All the incidents, all the parts, look like chance, whilst we feel and are sensible that the whole is design. His characters not only act and speak in strict conformity to nature, but in strict relation to us; just so much is shown as is requisite, just so much is impressed; he commands every passage to our heads and to our hearts, and moulds us as he pleases, and that with so much ease, that he never betrays his own exertions. We see these characters act from the mingled motives of passion, reason, interest, habit and complection, in all their proportions, when they are supposed to know it not themselves; and we are made to acknowledge that their actions and sentiments are, from those motives, the necessary result. He at once blends and distinguishes every thing;—every thing is complicated, every thing is plain. I restrain the further expressions of my admiration lest they should not seem applicable to man; but it is really astonishing that a mere human being, a part of humanity only, should so perfectly comprehend the whole; and that he should possess such exquisite art, that whilst every woman and every child shall feel the whole effect, his learned Editors and Commentators should yet so very frequently mistake or seem ignorant of the cause. A sceptre or a straw are in his hands of equal efficacy; he needs no selection; he converts everything into excellence; nothing is too great, nothing is too base. Is a character efficient like *Richard*, it is every thing we can wish: is it otherwise, like *Hamlet*, it is productive of equal admiration; action produces one mode of excellence and inaction another: the Chronicle, the Novel, or the Ballad; the king, or the beggar, the hero, the madman, the sot or the fool; it is all one;—nothing is worse, nothing is better: the same genius pervades and is equally admirable in all. Or, is a character to be shown in progressive change, and the events of years comprized within the hour;—with what a Magic hand does he prepare and scatter his spells! The Understanding must, in the first place be subdued; and lo! how the rooted prejudices of the child spring up to confound the man! The Weird sisters rise, and order is extinguished. The laws of nature give way, and leave nothing in our minds but wildness and horror. No pause is allowed us for reflection: horrid sentiment, furious guilt and compunction, air-drawn daggers, murders, ghosts, and inchantment, shake and *possess us wholly*. In the meantime the process is completed. *Macbeth* changes under our eye, *the milk of human kindness is converted to gall; he has supped full of horrors*, and his *May of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;* whilst we, the fools of amazement, are insensible to the shifting of place and the lapse of time, and till the curtain drops, never once wake to the truth of things, or recognize the laws of existence.—On such an occasion, a fellow, like *Rymer*, waking from his trance, shall lift up his Con-

stable's staff, and charge this great Magician, this daring *practicer of arts inhibited*, in the name of *Aristotle*, to surrender; whilst *Aristotle* himself, disowning his wretched Officer, would fall prostrate at his feet and acknowledge his supremacy. O supreme of Dramatic excellence! (*might he say*,) not to me be imputed the insolence of fools. The bards of *Greece* were confined within the narrow circle of the Chorus, and hence they found themselves constrained to practise, for the most part, the precision, and copy the details of nature. I followed them, and knew not that a larger circle might be drawn, and the Drama extended to the whole reach of human genius. Convinced, I see that a more compendious *nature* may be obtained; a nature of *effects* only, to which neither the relations of place, or continuity of time, are always essential. Nature, condescending to the faculties and apprehensions of man, has drawn through human life a regular chain of visible causes and effects: but Poetry delights in surprise, conceals her steps, seizes at once upon the heart, and obtains the Sublime of things without betraying the rounds of her ascent: true Poesy is *magic*, not *nature*; an effect from causes hidden or unknown. To the Magician I prescribed no laws; his law and his power are one; his power is his law. Him, who neither imitates, nor is within the reach of imitation, no precedent can or ought to bind, no limits to contain. If his end is obtained, who shall question his course? Means, whether apparent or hidden, are justified in poesy by success; but then most perfect and most admirable when most concealed.

The reader must be sensible of something in the composition of Shakespeare's characters, which renders them essentially different from those drawn by other writers. The characters of every Drama must indeed be grouped; but in the groups of other poets the parts which are not seen, do not in fact exist. But there is a certain roundness and integrity in the forms of Shakespeare, which give them an independence as well as a relation, insomuch that we often meet with passages, which though perfectly felt, cannot be sufficiently explained in words, without unfolding the whole character of the speaker.

GEORGE III. (*Diary of Madame D'Arblay*. 1785.)

'Was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakspeare? only one must not say so! But what think you?—What? Is there not sad stuff? What?—What? I know it is not to be said! but it's true. Only it's Shakespeare, and nobody dare abuse him.'

ROMANTIC CRITICISM

GERVINUS. (*Shakespeare Commentaries*. 1850. This passage is quoted here as it serves as an admirable introduction to German Romantic criticism.)

The man who first valued Shakespeare according to his full desert was indisputably Lessing. One single passage, where, in his 'Dramaturgie', he speaks of Romeo and Juliet, shows plainly that he apprehended his plays in their innermost nature, and this with the same unbiassed mind with which the poet wrote them. With all the force of a true taste, he pointed to Wieland's translation of the English dramatist, when scarcely anyone in Germany knew him. Not long before Shakespeare had been seriously compared amongst us with Gryphius; now Lessing appeared and discovered in the great tragic poet an accordance with the highest pretensions of Aristotle. The English editors and expositors of his works were yet under the Gallic yoke, when Lessing cast aside the French taste and the opinion of Voltaire, and with one stroke so transformed the age, that *we* now ridiculed the false sublimity of the French drama, as they had formerly laughed at English barbarism. Lessing's recommendation of the English poet was closely followed by Eschenburg's translation, and a completely altered taste among our young dramatists. A rude counterpoise to the exaggerations of French conventionality appeared for the moment necessary, in order to restore the even balance of judgment. In Goethe's youthful circle in Strasburg they spoke in Shakespeare's puns, jokes, and pleasantries; they wrote in his tone and style; they exhibited all the coarseness and nakedness of nature in contrast to French gloss and varnish, and felt themselves, from identity of character, as much at home with the Germanic nature of Shakespeare as with Hans Sachs. . . .

The distortion and extravagance of their early opinions passed in time from the minds of these men, who as poets and critics were equally prepared to take a wholly different view of the study of Shakespeare to that of the English commentators of old; the poet for the first time stands before us in the unassuming truth of nature. In 'Wilhelm Meister' Goethe produced that characteristic of Hamlet, which is like a key to all works of the poet; here all separate beauties are rejected, and the whole is explained by the whole, and we feel the soul of the outer frame-work and its animating breath, which created and organised the immortal work. . . .

While the Englishman lingered perhaps over isolated passages, we, on the contrary, destitute of all explanations, read rapidly on; we were careless about parts, and compared to the English reader we lost many separate beauties and ideas, but we enjoyed the whole more fully. For this enjoyment we were chiefly indebted to the translation of A. W. Schlegel, which even Englishmen read with admiration. . . . More than any other effort on behalf of the English poet, this translation has made him our own. Admiration reached a fresh point. And this rather with us than in England. . . .

However great were the merits of our Romanticists in having arranged Shakespeare's works for our enjoyment, even they have only slightly contributed to the inner understanding after which we seek, and to the unfolding of the human nature of the poet and the general value of his works. In A. W. Schlegel's 'Dramatic Lectures' the plays are singly discussed. All here testifies to poetic delicacy and sensibility; all is fair, alluring, inspiring—a panegyric of a totally different kind to the criticising characteristics of the English expositors. . . .

From 1811 to 1812 Coleridge had held lectures upon Shakespeare, so much in Schlegel's mind and manner, that a dispute arose as to the priority of merit of the two æsthetic philosophers. . . . He advanced the assertion—then a bold one in England—that not merely the splendour of different parts constituted the greatness of Shakespeare, by compensating for the barbarous shapelessness of the whole, but that he considered the æsthetic form of the whole equally admirable with the matter, and the judgment of the great poet not less deserving our wonder than his innate genius.

LESSING. (*Hamburgische Dramaturgie.* 1767.)

Love itself dictated 'Zaire' to Voltaire! said a polite art critic. He would have been nearer the truth had he said gallantry; I know but one tragedy at which love itself has laboured and that is 'Romeo and Juliet' by Shakespeare. It is incontestable, that Voltaire makes his enamoured Zaire express her feelings with much nicety and decorum. But what is this expression compared with that living picture of all the smallest, most secret, artifices whereby love steals into our souls, all the imperceptible advantages it gains thereby, all the subterfuges with which it manages to supersede every other passion until it succeeds in holding the post of sole tyrant of our desires and aversions? Voltaire perfectly understands the—so to speak—official language of love; that is to say the language and the tone love employs when it desires to express itself with caution and dignity, when it would say nothing but what the prudish female sophist and the cold critic can justify. Still even the most efficient government clerk does not always know the most about the secrets of his government; or else if Voltaire had the same deep insight as Shakespeare into the essence of love, he would not exhibit it here, and therefore the poem has remained beneath the capacities of the poet.

Almost the same might be said of jealousy. His jealous Orosman plays a sorry figure beside the jealous Othello of Shakespeare. And yet Othello has unquestionably furnished the prototype of Orosman. Cibber says Voltaire avails himself of the brand that lighted the tragic pile of Shakespeare. I should have said: a brand from out of this flaming pile and moreover one that smoked more than it glowed or warmed. In Orosman we hear a jealous man speak and we see him commit a rash deed of jealousy, but of jealousy itself we learn neither more nor less than what we knew before. Othello on the contrary is a complete manual of this deplorable madness; there we can learn all that refers to it and how we may avoid it.

But is it always Shakespeare, always and eternally Shakespeare who understood everything better than the French, I hear my readers ask? That annoys us, because we cannot read him. I seize this opportunity to remind the public of what it seems purposely to have forgotten. We have a translation of Shakespeare. . . The undertaking was a difficult one, and any other person than Herr Wieland would have made other slips in his haste, or have passed over more passages from ignorance or laziness, and what parts he has

done well few will do better. Any way his rendering of Shakespeare is a book that cannot be enough commended among us. We have much to learn yet from the beauties he has given to us.

GOETHE. (*Wilhelm Meister*. 1795. The rest of this famous passage on Hamlet is quoted on p. 417.)

Conceive a prince such as I have painted him, and that his father suddenly dies. Ambition and the love of rule are not the passions that inspire him. As a king's son he would have been contented: but now he is first constrained to consider the difference which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary; yet a longer possession of it by his father would have strengthened the pretensions of an only son, and secured his hopes of the succession. In place of this, he now beholds himself excluded by his uncle, in spite of specious promises, most probably forever. He is now poor in goods and favour, and a stranger in the scene which from youth he had looked upon as his inheritance. His temper here assumes its first mournful tinge. He feels that now he is not more, that he is less, than a private nobleman; he offers himself as the servant of every one; he is not courteous and condescending, he is needy and degraded.

His past condition he remembers as a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle strives to cheer him, to present his situation in another point of view. The feeling of his nothingness will not leave him.

The second stroke that came upon him wounded deeper, bowed still more. It was the marriage of his mother. The faithful tender son had yet a mother, when his father passed away. He hoped, in the company of his surviving noble-minded parent, to reverence the heroic form of the departed; but his mother too he loses, and it is something worse than death that robs him of her. The trustful image, which a good child loves to form of its parents, is gone. With the dead there is no help; on the living no hold. She also is a woman, and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

Now first does he feel himself completely bent and orphaned; and no happiness of life can repay what he has lost. Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow have become for him a heavy obligation. It is thus that we see him first enter on the scene. I do not think that I have mixed aught foreign with the piece, or overcharged a single feature of it.

A. W. SCHLEGEL. (*Über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur*. Lectures delivered in Vienna in 1808, and published 1812.)

Never, perhaps, was there so comprehensive a talent for the delineation of character as Shakespeare's. It not only grasps the diversities of rank, sex, and age, down to the dawnings of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot speak and act with equal truth; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations,

and portray in the most accurate manner, with only a few apparent violations of costume, the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in their wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, of the southern Europeans (in the serious part of many comedies) the cultivated society of that time, and the former rude and barbarous state of the North; his human characters have not only such depth and precision that they cannot be arranged under classes, and are inexhaustible, even in conception:—no—this Prometheus not merely forms men, he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits; calls up the midnight ghost; exhibits before us his witches amidst their unhallowed mysteries; peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs:—and these beings, existing only in imagination, possess such truth and consistency, that even when deformed monsters like Caliban, he extorts the conviction, that if there should be such beings, they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries with him the most fruitful and daring fancy to the kingdom of nature,—on the other hand, he carries nature into the regions of fancy, lying beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at seeing the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard of, in such intimate nearness.

If Shakespeare deserves our admiration for his characters, he is equally deserving of it for his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its widest significance, as including every mental condition, every tone from indifference or familiar mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of preceding conditions. His passions do not at first stand displayed to us in all their height, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints, in a most inimitable manner, the gradual progress from the first origin. 'He gives', as Lessing says, 'a living picture of all the most minute and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls; of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains; of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions.' Of all poets, perhaps, he alone has portrayed the mental diseases,—melancholy, delirium, lunacy,—with such inexpressible, and, in every respect, definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.

LAMB. (*On the Tragedies of Shakspeare.* 1811.)

It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help being of opinion that the plays of Shakespeare are less calculated for performance on a stage, than those of almost any other dramatist whatever. Their distinguishing excellence is a reason that they should be so. There is so much in them, which comes not under the province of acting, with which eye, and tone, and gesture, have nothing to do.

The glory of the scenic art is to personate passion, and the turns of passion: and the more coarse and palpable the passion is, the more hold upon the eyes

and ears of the spectators the performer obviously possesses. For this reason, scolding scenes, scenes where two persons talk themselves into a fit of fury, and then in a surprising manner talk themselves out of it again, have always been the most popular upon our stage. And the reason is plain, because the spectators are here most palpably appealed to, they are the proper judges in this war of words, they are the legitimate ring that should be formed round such 'intellectual prize-fighters'. Talking is the direct object of the imitation here. But in all the best dramas, and in Shakespeare above all, how obvious it is, that the form of *speaking*, whether it be in soliloquy or dialogue, is only a medium, and often a highly artificial one, for putting the reader or spectator into possession of that knowledge of the inner structure and workings of mind in a character, which he could otherwise never have arrived at *in that form of composition* by any gift short of intuition. We do here as we do with novels written in the *epistolary form*. How many improprieties, perfect solecisms in letter-writing, do we put up with in Clarissa and other books, for the sake of the delight which that form upon the whole gives us.

But the practice of stage representation reduces everything to a controversy of elocution. Every character, from the boisterous blasphemings of Bajazet to the shrinking timidity of womanhood, must play the orator. The love-dialogues of Romeo and Juliet, those silver-sweet sounds of lovers' tongues by night; the more intimate and sacred sweetness of nuptial colloquy between an Othello or a Posthumus with their married wives, all those delicacies which are so delightful in the reading, as when we read of those youthful dalliances in Paradise—

> As beseem'd
> Fair couple link'd in happy nuptial league,
> Alone:

by the inherent fault of stage representation, how are these things sullied and turned from their very nature by being exposed to a large assembly; when such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord, come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress, whose courtship, though nominally addressed to the personated Posthumus, is manifestly aimed at the spectators, who are to judge of her endearments and her returns of love. . . .

The truth is, the Characters of Shakespeare are so much the objects of meditation rather than of interest or curiosity as to their actions, that while we are reading any of his great criminal characters,—Macbeth, Richard, even Iago,—we think not so much of the crimes which they commit, as of the ambition, the aspiring spirit, the intellectual activity, which prompts them to overleap those moral fences. Barnwell is a wretched murderer; there is a certain fitness between his neck and the rope; he is the legitimate heir to the gallows; nobody who thinks at all can think of any alleviating circumstances in his case to make him a fit object of mercy. Or to take an instance from the higher tragedy, what else but a mere assassin is Glenalvon! Do we think of anything but of the crime which he commits, and the rack which he deserves? That is all which we really think about him. Whereas in corresponding characters in Shakspeare so little do the actions compara-

tively affect us, that while the impulses, the inner mind in all its perverted greatness, solely seems real and is exclusively attended to, the crime is comparatively nothing. But when we see these things represented, the acts which they do are comparatively every thing, their impulses nothing. The state of sublime emotion into which we are elevated by those images of night and horror which Macbeth is made to utter, that solemn prelude with which he entertains the time till the bell shall strike which is to call him to murder Duncan,—when we no longer read it in a book, when we have given up that vantage-ground of abstraction which reading possesses over seeing, and come to see a man in his bodily shape before our eyes actually preparing to commit a murder, if the acting be true and impressive, as I have witnessed it in Mr. K.'s performance of that part, the painful anxiety about the act, the natural longing to prevent it while it yet seems unperpetrated, the too close pressing semblance of reality, give a pain and an uneasiness which totally destroy all the delight which the words in the book convey, where the deed doing never presses upon us with the painful sense of presence: it rather seems to belong to history,—to something past and inevitable, if it has any thing to do with time at all. The sublime images, the poetry alone, is that which is present to our minds in the reading. . . .

It requires little reflection to perceive, that if those characters in Shakespeare which are within the precincts of nature, have yet something in them which appeals too exclusively to the imagination, to admit of their being made objects to the senses without suffering a change and a diminution,—that still stronger the objection must lie against representing another line of characters, which Shakspeare has introduced to give a wildness and a supernatural elevation to his senses, as if to remove them still farther from that assimilation to common life in which their excellence is vulgarly supposed to consist. When we read the incantations of those terrible beings the Witches in Macbeth, though some of the ingredients of their hellish composition savour of the grotesque, yet is the effect upon us other than the most serious and appalling that can be imagined? Do we not feel spell-bound as Macbeth was? Can any mirth accompany a sense of their presence? We might as well laugh under a consciousness of the principle of Evil himself being truly and really present with us. But attempt to bring these beings on to a stage, and you turn them instantly into so many old women, that men and children are to laugh at. Contrary to the old saying, that 'seeing is believing', the sight actually destroys the faith; and the mirth in which we indulge at their expense, when we see these creatures upon a stage, seems to be a sort of indemnification which we make to ourselves for the terror which they put us in when reading made them an object of belief,—when we surrendered up our reason to the poet, as children to their nurses and their elders; and we laugh at our fears, as children who thought they saw something in the dark, triumph when the bringing in of a candle discovers the vanity of their fears. For this exposure of supernatural agents upon a stage is truly bringing in a candle to expose their own delusiveness. . . .

The subject of Scenery is closely connected with that of the Dresses, which are so anxiously attended to on our stage. I remember the last time I

saw Macbeth played, the discrepancy I felt at the changes of garment which he varied,—the shiftings and re-shiftings, like a Romish priest at mass. The luxury of stage-improvements, and the importunity of the public eye, require this. The coronation robe of the Scottish monarch was fairly a counterpart to that which our King wears when he goes to the Parliament-house,—just so full and cumbersome, and set out with ermine and pearls. And if things must be represented, I see not what to find fault with in this. But in reading, what robe are we conscious of? Some dim images of royalty—a crown and sceptre, may float before our eyes, but who shall describe the fashion of it? Do we see in our mind's eye what Webb or any other robe-maker could pattern? This is the inevitable consequence of imitating every thing, to make all things natural. Whereas the reading of a tragedy is a fine abstraction. It presents to the fancy just so much of external appearances as to make us feel that we are among flesh and blood, while by far the greater and better part of our imagination is employed upon the thoughts and internal machinery of the character. But in acting, scenery, dress, the most contemptible things, call upon us to judge of their naturalness.

Perhaps it would be no bad similitude, to liken the pleasure which we take in seeing one of these fine plays acted, compared with that quiet delight which we find in the reading of it, to the different feelings with which a reviewer, and a man that is not a reviewer, reads a fine poem. The accursed critical habit,—the being called upon to judge and pronounce, must make it quite a different thing to the former. In seeing these plays acted, we are affected just as judges. When Hamlet compares the two pictures of Gertrude's first and second husband, who wants to see the pictures? But in the acting, a miniature must be lugged out; which we know not to be the picture, but only to show how finely a miniature may be represented. This shewing of every thing, levels all things: it makes tricks, bows, and curtesies, of importance. Mrs. S. never got more fame by any thing than by the manner in which she dismisses the guests in the banquet-scene in Macbeth: it is as much remembered as any of her thrilling tones or impressive looks. But does such a trifle as this enter into the imaginations of the readers of that wild and wonderful scene? Does not the mind dismiss the feasters as rapidly as it can? Does it care about the gracefulness of the doing it? But by acting, and judging of acting, all these non-essentials are raised into an importance, injurious to the main interest of the play.

I have confined my observations to the tragic parts of Shakespeare. It would be no very difficult task to extend the enquiry to his comedies; and to shew why Falstaff, Shallow, Sir Hugh Evans, and the rest, are equally incompatible with stage representation.

COLERIDGE. (*Essays and Lectures on Shakspeare*. 1818.)

Shakspeare's Judgment equal to his Genius

Thus then Shakespeare appears, from his Venus and Adonis and Rape of Lucrece alone, apart from all his great works, to have possessed all the con-

ditions of the true poet. Let me now proceed to destroy, as far as may be in my power, the popular notion that he was a great dramatist by mere instinct, that he grew immortal in his own despite, and sank below men of second or third-rate power, when he attempted aught beside the drama—even as bees construct their cells and manufacture their honey to admirable perfection; but would in vain attempt to build a nest. Now this mode of reconciling a compelled sense of inferiority with a feeling of pride, began in a few pedants, who having read that Sophocles was the great model of tragedy, and Aristotle the infallible dictator of its rules, and finding that the Lear, Hamlet, Othello and other master-pieces were neither in imitation of Sophocles, nor in obedience to Atistotle,—and not having (with one or two exceptions) the courage to affirm, that the delight which their country received from generation to generation, in defiance of the alterations of circumstances and habits, was wholly groundless,—took upon them, as a happy medium and refuge, to talk of Shakspeare as a sort of beautiful *lusus naturæ*, a delightful monster,—wild, indeed, and without taste or judgment, but like the inspired idiots so much venerated in the East, uttering, amid the strangest follies, the sublimest truths. In nine places out of ten in which I find his awful name mentioned, it is with some epithet of 'wild', 'irregular', 'pure child of nature', &c. If all this be true, we must submit to it; though to a thinking mind it cannot but be painful to find any excellence, merely human, thrown out of all human analogy, and thereby leaving us neither rules for imitation, nor motives to imitate;—but if false, it is a dangerous falsehood;—for it affords a refuge to secret self-conceit,—enables a vain man at once to escape his reader's indignation by general swoln panegyrics, and merely by his *ipse dixit* to treat, as contemptible, what he has not intellect enough to comprehend, or soul to feel, without assigning any reason, or referring his opinion to any demonstrative principle;—thus leaving Shakspeare as a sort of grand Lama, adored indeed, and his very excrements prized as relics, but with no authority or real influence. I grieve that every late voluminous edition of his works would enable me to substantiate the present charge with a variety of facts one tenth of which would of themselves exhaust the time allotted to me. Every critic, who has or has not made a collection of black letter books—in itself a useful and respectable amusement,—puts on the seven-league boots of self-opinion, and strides at once from an illustrator into a supreme judge, and blind and deaf, fills his three-ounce phial at the waters of Niagara; and determines positively the greatness of the cataract to be neither more nor less than his three-ounce phial has been able to receive.

I think this is a very serious subject. It is my earnest desire—my passionate endeavour,—to enforce at various times and by various arguments and instances the close and reciprocal connexion of just taste with pure morality. Without that acquaintance with the heart of man, or that docility and child-like gladness to be made acquainted with it, which those only can have, who dare look at their own hearts—and that with a steadiness which religion only has the power of reconciling with sincere humility;—without this, and the modesty produced by it, I am deeply convinced that no man, however wide his erudition, however patient his antiquarian researches,

can possibly understand, or be worthy of understanding, the writings of Shakspeare.

Assuredly that criticism of Shakspeare will alone be genial which is reverential. The Englishman, who without reverence, a proud and affectionate reverence, can utter the name of William Shakspeare, stands disqualified for the office of critic. He wants one at least of the very senses, the language of which he is to employ, and will discourse, at best, but as a blind man, while the whole harmonious creation of light and shade with all its subtle interchange of deepening and dissolving colours rises in silence to the silent *fiat* of the uprising Apollo. However inferior in ability I may be to some who have followed me, I own I am proud that I was the first in time who publicly demonstrated to the full extent of the position, that the supposed irregularity and extravagances of Shakspeare were the mere dreams of a pedantry that arraigned the eagle because it had not the dimensions of the swan. In all the successive courses of lectures delivered by me, since my first attempt at the Royal Institution, it has been, and it still remains, my object, to prove that in all points from the most important to the most minute, the judgment of Shakspeare is commensurate with his genius,—nay, that his genius reveals itself in his judgment, as in its most exalted form. And the more gladly do I recur to this subject from the clear conviction, that to judge aright, and with distinct consciousness of the grounds of our judgment, concerning the works of Shakspeare, implies the power and means of judging rightly of all other works of intellect, those of abstract science alone excepted. . . .

Let me, then, once more submit this question to minds emancipated alike from national, or party, or sectarian prejudice:—Are the plays of Shakspeare works of rude uncultivated genius, in which the splendour of the parts compensates, if aught can compensate, for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole?—Or is the form equally admirable with the matter, and the judgment of the great poet, not less deserving our wonder than his genius?—Or, again, to repeat the question in other words:—Is Shakspeare a great dramatic poet on account only of those beauties and excellences which he possesses in common with the ancients, but with diminished claims to our love and honour to the full extent of his differences from them?—Or are these very differences additional proofs of poetic wisdom, at once results and symbols of living power as contrasted with lifeless mechanism—of free and rival originality as contra-distinguished from servile imitation, or, more accurately, a blind copying of effects, instead of a true imitation, of the essential principles?—Imagine not that I am about to oppose genius to rules. No! the comparative value of these rules is the very cause to be tried. The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one; and what is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means? This is no discovery of criticism;—it is a necessity of the human mind; and all nations have felt and obeyed it, in the invention of metre, and measured sounds, as the vehicle and *involucrum* of poetry—

itself a fellow-growth from the same life,—even as the bark is to the tree!

No work of true genius dares want its appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination. How then comes it that not only single *Zoili*, but whole nations have combined in unhesitating condemnation of our great dramatist, as a sort of African nature, rich in beautiful monsters—as a wild heath where islands of fertility look the greener from the surrounding waste, where the loveliest plants now shine out among unsightly weeds, and now are choked by their parasitic growth, so intertwined that we cannot disentangle the weed without snapping the flower?—In this statement I have had no reference to the vulgar abuse of Voltaire, save as far as his charges are coincident with the decisions of Shakspeare's own commentators and (so they would tell you) almost idolatrous admirers. The true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material;—as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes, as it develops, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the prime genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers, is equally inexhaustible in forms;—each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within,—its true image reflected and thrown out from the concave mirror;—and even such is the appropriate excellence of her chosen poet, of our own Shakspeare,—himself such a nature humanized, a genial understanding directing selfconsciously a power and an implicit widsom deeper even than our consciousness.

I greatly dislike beauties and selections in general; but as proof positive of his unrivalled excellence, I should like to try Shakspeare by this criterion. Make out your amplest catalogue of all the human faculties, as reason or the moral law, the will, the feeling of the coincidence of the two (a feeling *sui generis et demonstratio demonstrationum*) called the conscience, the understanding or prudence, wit, fancy, imagination, judgment,—and then of the objects on which these are to be employed, as the beauties, the terrors, and the seeming caprices of nature, the realities and the capabilities, that is, the actual and the ideal, of the human mind, conceived as an individual or as a social being, as in innocence or in guilt, in a play-paradise, or in a war-field of temptation;—and then compare with Shakspeare under each of these heads all or any of the writers in prose and verse that have ever lived! Who, that is competent to judge, doubts the result?—And ask your own hearts,—ask your own common sense—to conceive the possibility of this man being—I say not, the drunken savage of that wretched sciolist, whom Frenchmen, to their shame, have honoured before their elder and better worthies,—but the anomalous, the wild, the irregular, genius of our daily criticism! What! are we to have miracles in sport?—Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?

The Characteristics of Shakspeare's Dramas.

Having intimated that times and manners lend their form and pressure to genius, let me once more draw a slight parallel between the ancient and modern stage, the stages of Greece and of England. The Greeks were polytheists; their religion was local; almost the only object of all their knowledge, art and taste, was their gods; and, accordingly, their productions were, if the expression may be allowed, statuesque, whilst those of the moderns are picturesque. The Greeks reared a structure, which in its parts, and as a whole, filled the mind with the calm and elevated impression of perfect beauty, and symmetrical proportion. The moderns also produced a whole, a more striking whole; but it was by blending materials and fusing the parts together. And as the Pantheon is to York Minster or Westminster Abbey, so is Sophocles compared with Shakespeare; in the one a completeness, a satisfaction, an excellence, on which the mind rests with complacency; in the other a multitude of interlaced materials, great and little, magnificent and mean, accompanied, indeed, with a sense of a falling short of perfection, and yet, at the same time, so promising of our social and individual progression, that we would not, if we could, exchange it for that repose of the mind which dwells on the forms of symmetry in the acquiescent admiration of grace. This general characteristic of the ancient and modern drama might be illustrated by a parallel of the ancient and modern music;—the one consisting of melody arising from a succession of only pleasing sounds,—the modern embracing harmony also, the result of combination and the effect of a whole.

I have said, and I say it again, that great as was the genius of Shakespeare, his judgment was at least equal to it. Of this any one will be convinced, who attentively considers those points in which the dramas of Greece and England differ, from the dissimilitude of circumstances by which each was modified and influenced. . . .

The stage in Shakespeare's time was a naked room with a blanket for a curtain; but he made it a field for monarchs. That law of unity, which has its foundations, not in the factitious necessity of custom, but in nature itself, the unity of feeling, is every where and at all times observed by Shakspeare in his plays. Read Romeo and Juliet;—all is youth and spring;—youth and its follies, its virtues, its precipitancies;—spring with its odours, its flowers, and its transiency; it is one and the same feeling that commences, goes through, and ends the play. The old men, the Capulets and the Montagues, are not common old men; they have an eagerness, a heartiness, a vehemence, the effect of spring; with Romeo, his change of passion, his sudden marriage, and his rash death, are all the effects of youth;—whilst in Juliet love has all that is tender and melancholy in the nightingale, all that is voluptuous in the rose, with whatever is sweet in the freshness of spring; but it ends with a long deep sigh like the last breeze of the Italian evening. This unity of feeling and character pervades every drama of Shakespeare.

It seems to me that his plays are distinguished from those of all other dramatic poets by the following characteristics:

1. Expectation in preference to surprise. It is like the true reading of the

passage:—'God said, Let there be light, and there was *light*';—not there *was* light. As the feeling with which we startle at a shooting star compared with that of watching the sunrise at the pre-established moment, such and so low is surprise compared with expectation.

2. Signal adherence to the great law of nature, that all opposites tend to attract and temper each other. Passion in Shakspeare generally displays libertinism, but involves morality; and if there are exceptions to this, they are, independently of their intrinsic value, all of them indicative of individual character, and, like the farewell admonitions of a parent, have an end beyond the parental relation. Thus the Countess's beautiful precepts to Bertram, by elevating her character, raise that of Helena her favorite, and soften down the point in her which Shakspeare does not mean us not to see, but to see and to forgive, and at length to justify. And so it is in Polonius, who is the personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed. This admirable character is always misrepresented on the stage. Shakspeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon; for although it was natural that Hamlet,—a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation,—should express himself satirically,—yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. In Polonius a certain induration of character had arisen from long habits of business; but take his advice to Laertes, and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, whilst what immediately takes place before him, and escapes from him, is indicative of weakness.

But as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus; so in Shakspeare all the characters are strong. Hence real folly and dulness are made by him the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.* A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry.

3. Keeping at all times in the high road of life. Shakspeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice;—he never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue, like Beaumont and Fletcher, the Kotzebues of the day. Shakspeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude, his husbands stung by unfaithfulness; in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may, nay, must, feel. Let the morality of Shakspeare be contrasted with that of the writers of his own, or the succeeding, age, or of those of the present day, who boast their superiority in this respect. No one can dispute that the result of such a comparison is altogether in favour of Shakspeare;—even the letters of women of high rank in his age were often coarser than his writings. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never injures the mind; he neither excites, nor flatters, passion, in order to degrade the subject of it; he does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare

against virtue, by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakspeare vice never walks as in twilight; nothing is purposely out of its place;—he inverts not the order of nature and propriety,—does not make every magistrate a drunkard or glutton, nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate; he has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers.

4. Independence of the dramatic interest on the plot. The interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedict and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the Much Ado About Nothing all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedict, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakspeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

5. Independence of the interest on the story as the ground-work of the plot. Hence Shakspeare never took the trouble of inventing stories. It was enough for him to select from those that had been already invented or recorded such as had one or other, or both, of two recommendations, namely, suitableness to his particular purpose, and their being parts of popular tradition,—names of which we had often heard, and of their fortunes, and as to which all we wanted was, to see the man himself. So it is just the man himself, the Lear, the Shylock, the Richard, that Shakspeare makes us for the first time acquainted with. Omit the first scene in Lear, and yet every thing will remain; so the first and second scenes in the Merchant of Venice. Indeed it is universally true.

6. Interfusion of the lyrical—that which in its very essence is poetical—not only with the dramatic, as in the plays of Metastasio, where at the end of the scene comes the *aria* as the *exit* speech of the character,—but also in and through the dramatic. Songs in Shakspeare are introduced as songs only, just as songs are in real life, beautifully as some of them are characteristic of the person who has sung or called for them, as Desdemona's 'Willow', and Ophelia's wild snatches, and the sweet carollings in As You Like It. But the whole of the Midsummer Night's Dream is one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical. And observe how exquisitely the dramatic of Hotspur:—

> Marry, and I'm glad on't with all my heart;
> I'd rather be a kitten and cry—mew, &c.

melts away into the lyric of Mortimore:—

I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh
Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens,
I am too perfect in, &c.

7. The characters of the *dramatis personæ*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader;—they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakspeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood, and almost always understood by different persons in different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the character say, you may be deceived, and still more so, if that which his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together, not omitting a shrewd hint from the clown or the fool, and perhaps your impression will be right; and you may know whether you have in fact discovered the poet's own idea, by all the speeches receiving light from it, and attesting its reality by reflecting it.

Lastly, in Shakespeare the heterogeneous is united, as it is in nature. You must not suppose a pressure or passion always acting in or on a character!—passion in Shakspeare is that by which the individual is distinguished from others, not that which makes a different kind of him. Shakspeare followed the main march of the human affections. He entered into no analysis of the passions or faiths of men, but assured himself that such and such passions and faiths were grounded in our common nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance or disease. This is an important consideration, and constitutes our Shakspeare the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy.

HAZLITT. (*Lectures on the English Poets.* 1818.)

The striking peculiarity of Shakspeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds—so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more than another. He was just like any other man, but that he was like all other men. He was the least of an egotist that it was possible to be. He was nothing in himself; but he was all that others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict of passion, or turn of thought. He had 'a mind reflecting ages past', and present:—all the people that ever lived are there. There was no respect of persons with him. His genius shone equally on the evil and on the good, on the wise and the foolish, the monarch and the beggar: 'All corners of the earth, kings, queens, and states, maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave', are hardly hid from his searching glance. He was like the genius of humanity, changing places with all of us at pleasure, and playing with our purposes as

with his own. He turned the globe round for his amusement, and surveyed the generations of men, and the individuals as they passed, with their different concerns, passions, follies, vices, virtues, actions, and motives—as well those that they knew, as those which they did not know, or acknowledge to themselves. The dreams of childhood, the ravings of despair, were the toys of his fancy. Airy beings waited at his cell, and came at his bidding. Harmless fairies 'nodded to him, and did him curtesies': and the night-hag bestrode the blast at the command of 'his so potent art'. The world of spirits lay open to him, like the world of real men and women: and there is the same truth in his delineations of the one as of the other; for if the preternatural characters he describes could be supposed to exist, they would speak, and feel, and act, as he makes them. He had only to think of any thing in order to become that thing, with all the circumstances belonging to it. When he conceived of a character, whether real or imaginary, he not only entered into all its thoughts and feelings, but seemed instantly, and as if by touching a secret spring, to be surrounded with all the same objects, 'subject to the same skyey influences', the same local, outward, and unforeseen accidents which would occur in reality. Thus the character of Caliban not only stands before us with a language and manners of its own, but the scenery and situation of the enchanted island he inhabits, the traditions of the place, its strange noises, its hidden recesses, 'his frequent haunts and ancient neighbourhood', are given with a miraculous truth of nature, and with all the familiarity of an old recollection. The whole 'coheres semblably together' in time, place, and circumstance. In reading this author, you do not merely learn what his characters say,—you see their persons. By something expressed or understood, you are at no loss to decypher their peculiar physiognomy, the meaning of a look, the grouping, the bye-play, as we might see it on the stage. A word, an epithet paints a whole scene, or throws us back whole years in the history of the person represented. So (as it has been ingeniously remarked) when Prospero describes himself as left alone in the boat with his daughter, the epithet which he applies to her, 'Me and thy *crying* self?' flings the imagination instantly back from the grown woman to the helpless condition of infancy, and places the first and most trying scene of his misfortunes before us, with all that he must have suffered in the interval. . . . It is not 'a combination and a form' of words, a set speech or two, a preconcerted theory of a character, that will do this: but all the persons concerned must have been present in the poet's imagination, as at a kind of rehearsal; and whatever would have passed through their minds on the occasion, and have been observed by others, passed through his, and is made known to the reader. . . .

That which, perhaps, more than any thing else distinguishes the dramatic productions of Shakspeare from all others, is this wonderful truth and individuality of conception. Each of his characters is as much itself, and as absolutely independent of the rest, as well as of the author, as if they were living persons, not fictions of the mind. The poet may be said, for the time, to identify himself with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to another, like the same soul successively animating different bodies. By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out

of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the mouth of the person in whose name it is given. His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors. One might suppose that he had stood by at the time, and overheard what passed. As in our dreams we hold conversations with ourselves, make remarks, or communicate intelligence, and have no idea of the answer which we shall receive, and which we ourselves make, till we hear it: so the dialogues in Shakspeare are carried on without any consciousness of what is to follow, without any appearance of preparation or premeditation. The gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the mind. Nothing is made out by formal inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis: all comes, or seems to come, immediately from nature. Each object and circumstance exists in his mind, as it would have existed in reality: each several train of thought and feeling goes on of itself, without confusion or effort. In the world of his imagination, every thing has a life, a place, and being of its own. . . .

Chaucer's characters are narrative, Shakspeare's dramatic, Milton's epic. That is, Chaucer told only as much of his story as he pleased, as was required for a particular purpose. He answered for his characters himself. In Shakspeare they are introduced upon the stage, are liable to be asked all sorts of questions, and are forced to answer for themselves. In Chaucer we perceive a fixed essence of character. In Shakspeare there is a continual composition and decomposition of its elements, a fermentation of every particle in the whole mass, by its alternate affinity or antipathy to other principles which are brought in contact with it. Till the experiment is tried, we do not know the result, the turn which the character will take in its new circumstances. Milton took only a few simple principles of character, and raised them to the utmost conceivable grandeur, and refined them from every base alloy. His imagination, 'nigh sphered in Heaven', claimed kindred only with what he saw from that height, and could raise to the same elevation with itself. He sat retired and kept his state alone, 'playing with wisdom'; while Shakspeare mingled with the crowd, and played the host, 'to make society the sweeter welcome'.

The passion in Shakspeare is of the same nature as his delineation of character. It is not some one habitual feeling or sentiment preying upon itself, growing out of itself, and moulding every thing to itself; it is passion modified by passion, by all the other feelings to which the individual is liable, and to which others are liable with him; subject to all the fluctuations of caprice and accident; calling into play all the resources of the understanding and all the energies of the will; irritated by obstacles or yielding to them; rising from small beginnings to its utmost height; now drunk with hope, now stung to madness, now sunk in despair, now blown to air with a breath, now raging like a torrent. The human soul is made the sport of fortune, the prey of adversity: it is stretched on the wheel of destiny, in restless ecstasy. The passions are in a state of projection. Years are melted down to moments, and every instant teems with fate. We know the results, we see the process. Thus after Iago had been boasting to himself of the effect of his poisonous

suggestions on the mind of Othello, 'which, with a little act upon the blood, will work like mines of sulphur', he adds—

> 'Look where he comes! not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the East,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday.'—

And he enters at this moment, like the crested serpent, crowned with his wrongs and raging for revenge! The whole depends upon the turn of a thought. A word, a look, blows the spark of jealousy into a flame; and the explosion is immediate and terrible as a volcano. The dialogues in Lear, in Macbeth, that between Brutus and Cassius, and nearly all those in Shakspeare, where the interest is wrought up to its highest pitch, afford examples of this dramatic fluctuation of passion. The interest in Chaucer is quite different; it is like the course of a river, strong, and full, and increasing. In Shakspeare, on the contrary, it is like the sea, agitated this way and that, and loud-lashed by furious storms; while in the still pauses of the blast, we distinguish only the cries of despair, or the silence of death. . . .

Shakspeare's imagination is of the same plastic kind as his conception of character or passion. 'It glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.' Its movement is rapid and devious. It unites the most opposite extremes: or, as Puck says, in boasting of his own feats, 'puts a girdle round the earth in forty minutes'. He seems always hurrying from his subject, even while describing it, but the stroke, like the lightning's, is sure as it is sudden. He takes the widest possible range, but from that very range he has his choice of the greatest variety and aptitude of materials. He brings together images the most alike, but placed at the greatest distance from each other; that is, found in circumstances of the greatest dissimilitude. From the remoteness of his combinations, and the celerity with which they are effected, they coalesce the more indissolubly together. The more the thoughts are strangers to each other, and the longer they have been kept asunder, the more intimate does their union seem to become. Their felicity is equal to their force. Their likeness is made more dazzling by their novelty. They startle, and take the fancy prisoner in the same instant. I will mention one or two which are very striking, and not much known, out of Troilus and Cressida. Æneas says to Agamemnon,

> I ask that I may waken reverence,
> And on the cheek be ready with a blush
> Modest as morning, when she coldly eyes
> The youthful Phœbus.

Ulysses urging Achilles to shew himself in the field, says—

> No man is the lord of anything,
> Till he communicate his parts to others:
> Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,
> Till he behold them formed in the applause,

> Where they're extended! which like an arch reverberates
> The voice again, or like a gate of steel,
> Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
> Its figure and its heat.

Patroclus gives the indolent warrior the same advice.

> Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
> Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
> And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane
> Be shook to air.

Shakspeare's language and versification are like the rest of him. He has a magic power over words: they come winged at his bidding; and seem to know their places. They are struck out at a heat, on the spur of the occasion, and have all the truth and vividness which arise from an actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles, thrown off from an imagination, fired by the whirling rapidity of its own motion. His language is hieroglyphical. It translates thoughts into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed metaphors, which are only abbreviated forms of speech. These, however, give no pain from long custom. They have, in fact, become idioms in the language. They are the building, and not the scaffolding to thought. We take the meaning and effect of a well-known passage entire, and no more stop to scan and spell out the particular words and phrases, than the syllables of which they are composed. In trying to recollect any other author, one sometimes stumbles, in case of failure, on a word as good. In Shakspeare, any other word but the true one, is sure to be wrong. If any body, for instance, could not recollect the words of the following description,

> —Light thickness,
> And the crow makes wing to the rooky wood,

he would be greatly at a loss to substitute others for them equally expressive of the feeling. These remarks, however, are strictly applicable only to the impassioned parts of Shakspeare's language, which flowed from the warmth and originality of his imagination, and were his own. The language used for prose conversation and ordinary business is sometimes technical, and involved in the affectation of the time. Compare, for example, Othello's apology to the senate, relating 'his whole course of love', with some of the preceding parts relating to his appointment, and the official dispatches from Cyprus. In this respect, 'the business of the state does him offence'. His versification is no less powerful, sweet, and varied. It has every occasional excellence, of sullen intricacy, crabbed and perplexed, or of the smoothest and loftiest expansion—from the ease and familiarity of measured conversation to the lyrical sounds

> —Of ditties highly penned,
> Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
> With ravishing division to her lute.

It is the only blank verse in the language, except Milton's, that for itself is readable. It is not stately and uniformly swelling like his, but varied and broken by the inequalities of the ground it has to pass over in its uncertain course,

> And so by many winding nooks it strays,
> With willing sport to the wild ocean.

It remains to speak of the faults of Shakspeare. They are not so many or so great as they have been represented; what they are, are chiefly owing to the following causes:—The universality of his genius was, perhaps, a disadvantage to his single works; the variety of his resources, sometimes diverting him from applying them to the utmost effectual purposes. He might be said to combine the powers of Æschylus and Aristophanes, of Dante and Rabelais, in his own mind. If he had been only half what he was, he would perhaps have appeared greater. The natural ease and indifference of his temper made him sometimes less scrupulous than he might have been. He is relaxed and careless in critical places; he is in earnest throughout only in Timon, Macbeth, and Lear. Again, he had no models of acknowledged excellence constantly in view to stimulate his efforts, and by all that appears, no love of fame. He wrote for the 'great vulgar and the small', in his time, not for posterity. If Queen Elizabeth and the maids of honour laughed heartily at his worst jokes, and the catcalls in the gallery were silent at his best passages, he went home satisfied, and slept the next night well. He did not trouble himself about Voltaire's criticisms. He was willing to take advantage of the ignorance of the age in many things; and if his plays pleased others, not to quarrel with them himself. His very facility of production would make him set less value on his own excellences, and not care to distinguish nicely between what he did well or ill. His blunders in chronology and geography do not amount to above half a dozen, and they are offences against chronology and geography, not against poetry. As to the unities, he was right in setting them at defiance. He was fonder of puns than became so great a man. His barbarisms were those of his age. His genius was his own. He had no objection to float down with the stream of common taste and opinion: he rose above it by his own buoyancy, and an impulse which he could not keep under, in spite of himself or others, and 'his delights did shew most dolphin-like'.

He had an equal genius for comedy and tragedy; and his tragedies are better than his comedies, because tragedy is better than comedy. His female characters, which have been found fault with as insipid, are the finest in the world. Lastly, Shakspeare was the least of a coxcomb of any one that evet lived, and much of a gentleman.

De Quincey. (*On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth.* 1823.)

From my boyish days I had always felt a great perplexity on one point in Macbeth. It was this: the knocking at the gate, which succeeds to the murder of Duncan, produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account.

The effect was, that it reflected back upon the murderer a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity; yet, however obstinately I endeavoured with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see *why* it should produce such an effect.

Here I pause for one moment, to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding, when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind. The mere understanding, however useful and indispensable, is the meanest faculty in the human mind, and the most to be distrusted; and yet the great majority of people trust to nothing else, which may do for ordinary life, but not for philosophical purposes. . . .

But to return from this digression, my understanding could furnish no reason why the knocking at the gate in Macbeth should produce any effect, direct or reflected. In fact, my understanding said positively that it could *not* produce any effect. But I knew better; I felt that it did; and I waited and clung to the problem until further knowledge should enable me to solve it. At length, in 1812, Mr. Williams made his *début* on the stage of Ratcliffe Highway, and executed those unparalleled murders which have procured for him such a brilliant and undying reputation. . . . Now it will be remembered, that in the first of these murders (that of the Marrs), the same incident (of a knocking at the door, soon after the work of extermination was complete) did actually occur, which the genius of Shakspeare has invented; and all good judges, and the most eminent dilettanti, acknowledged the felicity of Shakspere's suggestion, as soon as it was actually realized. Here, then, was a fresh proof that I was right in relying on my own feeling, in opposition to my understanding; and I again set myself to study the problem; at length I solved it to my own satisfaction, and my solution is this. Murder, in ordinary cases, where the sympathy is wholly directed to the case of the murdered person, is an incident of coarse and vulgar horror; and for this reason, that it flings the interest exclusively upon the natural but ignoble instinct by which we cleave to life; an instinct which, as being indispensable to the primal law of self-preservation, is the same in kind (though different in degree) amongst all living creatures: this instinct, therefore, because it annihilates all distinctions, and degrades the greatest of men to the level of 'the poor beetle that we tread on', exhibits human nature in its most abject and humiliating attitude. Such an attitude would little serve the purposes of the poet. What then must he do? He must throw the interest on the murderer. Our sympathy must be with *him* (of course I mean a sympathy of comprehension, a sympathy by which we enter into his feelings, and are made to understand them,—not a sympathy of pity or approbation). In the murdered person, all strife of thought, all flux and reflux of passion and of purpose, are crushed by one overwhelming panic; the fear of instant death smites him 'with its petrific mace'. But in the murderer, such a murderer as a poet will condescend to, there must be raging some great storm of passion—jealousy, ambition, vengeance, hatred—which will create a hell within him; and into this hell we are to look.

In *Macbeth*, for the sake of gratifying his own enormous and teeming faculty of creation, Shakspere has introduced two murderers: and, as usual in

his hands, they are remarkably discriminated: but, though in Macbeth the strife of mind is greater than in his wife, the tiger spirit not so awake, and his feelings caught chiefly by contagion from her,—yet, as both were finally involved in the guilt of the murder, the murderous mind of necessity is finally to be presumed in both. This was to be expressed; and on its own account, as well as to make it a more proportionable antagonist to the unoffending nature of their victim, 'the gracious Duncan', and adequately to expound 'the deep damnation of his taking off', this was to be expressed with peculiar energy. We were to be made to feel that the human nature, *i.e.*, the divine nature of love and mercy, spread through the hearts of all creatures, and seldom utterly withdrawn from man—was gone, vanished, extinct; and that the fiendish nature had taken its place. And, as this effect is marvellously accomplished in the *dialogues* and *soliloquies* themselves, so it is finally consummated by the expedient under consideration; and it is to this that I now solicit the reader's attention. If the reader has ever witnessed a wife, daughter, or sister in a fainting fit, he may chance to have observed that the most affecting moment in such a spectacle is *that* in which a sigh and a stirring announce the recommencement of suspended life. Or, if the reader has ever been present in a vast metropolis, on the day when some great national idol was carried in funeral pomp to his grave, and chancing to walk near the course through which it passed, has felt powerfully in the silence and desertion of the streets, and in the stagnation of ordinary business, the deep interest which at that moment was possessing the heart of man—if all at once he should hear the death-like stillness broken up by the sound of wheels rattling away from the scene, and making known that the transitory vision was dissolved, he will be aware that at no moment was his sense of the complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns so full and affecting, as at that moment when the suspension ceases, and the goings-on of human life are suddenly resumed. All action in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reaction. Now apply this to the case in Macbeth. Here, as I have said, the retiring of the human heart, and the entrance of the fiendish heart was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has stept in; and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, human desires. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is 'unsexed'; Macbeth has forgot that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is suddenly revealed. But how shall this be conveyed and made palpable? In order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear. The murderers, and the murder must be insulated—cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs—locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested—laid asleep—tranced—racked into a dreadful armistice; time must be annihilated; relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is, that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has com-

menced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.

O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers; like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert—but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!

LANDOR. (*Imaginary Conversations.* 1824.)

Southey. In so wide and untrodden a creation as that of Shakspeare, can we wonder or complain that sometimes we are bewildered and entangled in the exuberance of fertility? Dry-brained men upon the Continent, the trifling wits of the theatre, accurate however and expert calculators, tell us that his beauties are balanced by his faults. The poetical opposition, puffing for popularity, cry cheerily against them, *his faults are balanced by his beauties;* when, in reality, all the faults that ever were committed in poetry would be but as air to earth, if we could weigh them against one single thought or image, such as almost every scene exhibits in every drama of this unrivalled genius. Do you hear me with patience?

Porson. With more; although at Cambridge we rather discourse on Bacon, for we know him better. He was immeasurably a less wise man than Shakspeare, and not a wiser writer: for he knew his fellow-man only as he saw him in the street and in the court, which indeed is but a dirtier street and a narrower: Shakspeare, who also knew him there, knew him everywhere else, both as he was, and as he might be.

Southey. There is as great a difference between Shakespeare and Bacon as between an American forest and a London timber-yard. In the timber-yard the materials are sawed and squared and set across: in the forest we have the natural form of the trees, all its growth, all its branches, all its leaves, all the mosses that grow about it, all the birds and insects that inhabit it; now deep shadows absorbing the whole wilderness; now bright bursting glades, with exuberant grass and flowers and fruitage; now untroubled skies; now terrific thunderstorms; everywhere multiformity, everywhere immensity.

VICTOR HUGO. (*Préface de Cromwell.* 1827.)

Le moment est venu où l'équilibre entre les deux principes (le grotesque et le sublime) va s'établir. Un homme, un poète roi, *poeta soverano,* comme Dante le dit d'Homère, va tout fixer. Les deux génies rivaux unissent leur double flamme, et de cette flamme jaillit Shakspeare.

Nous voici parvenus à la sommité poétique des temps modernes. Shakspeare, c'est le Drame; et le drame, qui font sous un même souffle le grotesque et le sublime, le terrible et le bouffon, la tragédie et la comédie, le drame est le caractère propre de la troisième époque de poésie, de la littérature actuelle. . . .

Les personnages de l'ode sont des colosses: Adam, Caïn, Noé; ceux de l'épopée sont des géants: Achille, Atrée, Oreste; ceux du drame sont des hommes: Hamlet, Macbeth, Otello. L'ode vit de l'idéal, l'épopée du grandiose, le drame du réel. Enfin, cette triple poésie découle de trois grandes sources: la Bible, Homère, Shakspeare. . . .

Grâce à lui, point d'impressions monotones. Tantôt il jette du rire, tantôt de l'horreur dans la tragédie. Il fera rencontrer l'apothicaire à Roméo, les trois sorcières à Macbeth, les fossoyeurs à Hamlet. Parfois enfin il peut sans discordance, comme dans la scène du roi Lear et de son Fou, mêler sa voix criarde aux plus sublimes, aux plus lugubres, aux plus rêveuses musiques de l'âme.

Voilà ce qu'a su faire entre tous, d'une manière qui lui est propre et qu'il serait aussi inutile qu'impossible d'imiter, Shakspeare, ce dieu du théâtre, en qui semblent réunis, comme dans une trinité, les trois grands génies caractéristiques de notre scène: Corneille, Molière, Beaumarchais. . . .

Et puis, encore une fois, il y a de ces *fautes* qui ne prennent racine que dans les chefs-d'œuvre; il n'est donné qu'à certains génies d'avoir certains défauts. On reproche à Shakspeare l'abus de la métaphysique, l'abus de l'esprit, des scènes parasites, des obscénités, l'emploi des friperies mythologiques de mode dans son temps, de l'extravagance, de l'obscurité, du mauvais goût, de l'enflure, des aspérités de style. Le chêne, cet arbre géant que nous comparions tout à l'heure à Shakspeare et qui a plus d'une analogie avec lui, le chêne a le port bizarre, les rameaux noueux, le feuillage sombre, l'écorce âpre et rude; mais il est le chêne.

LATER NINETEENTH-CENTURY CRITICISM

CARLYLE. (*On Heroes and Hero Worship.* 1840.)

Well: this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us;—on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat: In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakespear has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give up rather than the Stratford Peasant? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would

not surrender rather than him? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give up your Indian Empire or your Shakspeare, you English; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakspeare? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer; Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire; we cannot do without Shakspeare! Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day; but this Shakspeare does not go, he lasts forever with us; we cannot give up our Shakspeare!

Nay, apart from spiritualities; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish: what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs; *in*destructible; really more valuable in that point of view, than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: 'Yes, this Shakspeare is ours: we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him.' The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

E. A. Abbott. (*A Shakespearian Grammar.* 1869.)

It was an age of experiments, and the experiments were not always successful. . . . But for freedom, for brevity, and for vigour, Elizabethan is superior to modern English. Many of the words employed by Shakespeare and his contemporaries were the recent inventions of the age; hence they were used with a freshness and exactness to which we are strangers. Again, the spoken English so far predominated over the grammatical English that it materially influenced the rhythm of the verse, the construction of the sentence, and even sometimes the spelling of words. Hence sprung an artless and unlaboured harmony which seems the natural heritage of Elizabethan poets, whereas such harmony as is attained by modern authors frequently betrays a painful excess of art. Lastly, the use of some few still remaining inflections (the subjunctive in particular), the lingering *sense* of many other inflections that had passed away leaving behind something of the old versatility and audacity in the

arrangement of the sentence, the stern subordination of grammar to terseness and clearness, and the consequent directness and naturalness of expression, all conspire to give a liveliness and wakefulness to Shakespearian English which are wanting in the grammatical monotony of the present day. We may perhaps claim some superiority in completeness and perspicuity for modern English, but if we were to appeal on this ground to the shade of Shakespeare in the words of Antonio in the *Tempest*,—

'Do you not hear us speak?'

we might fairly be crushed with the reply of Sebastian—

'I do; and surely
It is a sleepy language.'

EDWARD DOWDEN. (*Shakspere: His Mind and Art.* 1875.)

Over the beauty of youth and the love of youth, there is shed, in these plays of Shakspere's final period, a clear yet tender luminousness, not elsewhere to be perceived in his writings. In his earlier plays, Shakspere writes concerning young men and maidens, their loves, their mirths, their griefs, as one who is among them, who has a lively, personal interest in their concerns, who can make merry with them, treat them familiarly, and, if need be, can mock them into good sense. There is nothing in these early plays wonderful, strangely beautiful, pathetic about youth and its joys and sorrows. In the histories and tragedies, as was to be expected, more massive, broader, or more profound objects of interest engaged the poet's imagination. But in these latest plays, the beautiful pathetic light is always present. There are the sufferers, aged, experienced, tried—Queen Katharine, Prospero, Hermione. And over against these there are the children absorbed in their happy and exquisite egoism,—Perdita and Miranda, Florizel and Ferdinand, and the boys of old Belarius.

The same means to secure ideality for these figures, so young and beautiful, is in each case (instinctively perhaps rather than deliberately) resorted to. They are lost children—princes or a princess, removed from the court, and its conventional surroundings, into some scene of rare, natural beauty. There are the lost princes—Arviragus and Guiderius, among the mountains of Wales, drinking the free air, and offering their salutations to the risen sun. There is Perdita, the shepherdess-princess, 'queen of curds and cream', sharing with old and young her flowers, lovelier and more undying than those that Proserpina let fall from Dis's waggon. There is Miranda, (whose very name is significant of wonder), made up of beauty, and love, and womanly pity, neither courtly nor rustic, with the breeding of an island of enchantment, where Prospero is her tutor and protector, and Caliban her servant, and the prince of Naples her lover. In each of these plays we can see Shakspere, as it were, tenderly bending over the joys and sorrows of youth. We recognise this rather through the total characterization, and through a feeling

and a presence, than through definite incident and statement. But some of this feeling escapes in the disinterested joy and admiration of old Belarius when he gazes at the princely youths, and in Camillo's loyalty to Florizel and Perdita; while it obtains more distinct expression in such a word as that which Prospero utters, when from a distance he watches with pleasure Miranda's zeal to relieve Ferdinand from his task of log-bearing:—'Poor worm, thou art infected.' . . .

A thought which seems to run through the whole of The Tempest, appearing here and there like a coloured thread in some web, is the thought that the true freedom of man consists in service. Ariel, untouched by human feeling, is panting for his liberty; in the last words of Prospero are promised his enfranchisement and dismissal to the elements. Ariel reverences his great master, and serves him with bright alacrity; but he is bound by none of our human ties, strong and tender, and he will rejoice when Prospero is to him as though he never were. To Caliban, a land-fish, with the duller elements of earth and water in his composition, but no portion of the higher elements, air and fire, though he receives dim intimations of a higher world,—a musical humming, or a twangling, or a voice heard in sleep—to Caliban, service is slavery. He hates to bear his logs; he fears the incomprehensible power of Prospero, and obeys, and curses. The great master has usurped the rights of the brute-power Caliban. And when Stephano and Trinculo appear, ridiculously impoverished specimens of humanity, with their shallow understand- and vulgar greeds, this poor earth-monster is possessed by a sudden *schwärmerei*, a fanaticism for liberty!—

> 'Ban, 'ban, Ca'-Caliban,
> Has a new master; get a new man.
> Freedom, heydey! heydey, freedom! freedom! freedom, heydey, freedom!

His new master also sings his impassioned hymn of liberty, the *Marseillaise* of the enchanted island:

> Flout 'em and scout 'em,
> And scout 'em and flout 'em;
> Thought is free.

The leaders of the revolution, escaped from the stench and foulness of the horse-pond, King Stephano and his prime minister Trinculo, like too many leaders of the people, bring to an end their great achievement on behalf of liberty by quarrelling over booty,—the trumpery which the providence of Prospero had placed in their way. Caliban, though scarce more truly wise or instructed than before, at least discovers his particular error of the day and hour:

> What a thrice-double ass
> Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
> And worship this dull fool!

It must be admitted that Shakspere, if not, as Hartley Coleridge asserted, 'a Tory and a gentleman', had within him some of the elements of English conservatism.

SWINBURNE. (*A Study of Shakespeare.* 1880.)

We have now come to that point at the opening of the second stage in his work where the supreme genius of all time begins first to meddle with the mysteries and varieties of human character, to handle its finer and more subtle qualities, to harmonise its more untuned and jarring discords; giving here and thus the first proof of a power never shared in like measure by the mightiest among the sons of men, a sovereign and serene capacity to fathom the else unfathomable depths of spiritual nature, to solve its else insoluble riddles, to reconcile its else irreconcilable discrepancies. In first stage Shakspeare had dropped his plummet no deeper into the sea of the spirit of man than Marlowe had sounded before him; and in the channel of simple emotion no poet could cast surer line with steadier hand than he. Further down in the dark and fiery depths of human pain and mortal passion no soul could search than his who first rendered into speech the aspirations and the agonies of a ruined and revolted spirit. And until Shakespeare found in himself the strength of eyesight to read and the cunning of handiwork to render those wider diversities of emotion and those further complexities of character which lay outside the range of Marlowe, he certainly cannot be said to have outrun the winged feet, outstripped the fiery flight of his forerunner. In the heaven of our tragic song the first-born star on the forehead of its herald god was not outshone till the full midsummer meridian of that greater godhead before whom he was sent to prepare a pathway for the sun. Through all the forenoon of our triumphant day, till the utter consummation and ultimate ascension of dramatic poetry incarnate and transfigured in the master-singer of the world, the quality of his tragedy was as that of Marlowe's, broad, single, and intense; large of hand, voluble of tongue, direct of purpose. With the dawn of its latter epoch a new power comes upon it, to find clothing and expression in new forms of speech and after a new style. The language has put off its foreign decorations of lyric and elegiac ornament; it has found already its infinite gain in the loss of those sweet superfluous graces which encumbered the march and enchained the utterance of its childhood. The figures which it invests are now no more the types of a single passion, the incarnations of a single thought. They now demand a scrutiny which tests the power of a mind and tries the value of a judgment; they appeal to something more than the instant apprehension which sufficed to respond to the immediate claim of those that went before them. Romeo and Juliet were simply lovers, and their names bring back to us no further thought than of their love and the lovely sorrow of its end; Antony and Cleopatra shall be before all things lovers, but the thought of their love and its triumphant tragedy shall recall other things beyond number—all the forces and all the fortunes of mankind, all the chance and all the consequence that waited on their imperial passion, all the infinite variety of qualities and powers wrought together and welded into the frame and composition of that love which shook from end to end all nations and kingdoms of the earth.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CRITICISM

A. C. BRADLEY. (*Shakespearean Tragedy*. 1904.)

A Shakespearean tragedy as so far considered may be called a story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high estate. But it is clearly much more than this, and we have now to regard it from another side. No amount of calamity which merely befell a man, descending from the clouds like lightning, or stealing from the darkness like pestilence, could alone provide the substance of its story. Job was the greatest of all the children of the east, and his afflictions were well-nigh more than he could bear; but even if we imagined them wearing him to death, that would not make his story tragic. Nor yet would it become so, in the Shakespearean sense, if the fire, and the great wind from the wilderness, and the torments of his flesh were conceived as sent by a supernatural power, whether just or malignant. The calamities of tragedy do not simply happen, nor are they sent; they proceed mainly from actions, and those the actions of men.

We see a number of human beings placed in certain circumstances; and we see, arising from the co-operation of their characters in these circumstances, certain actions. These actions beget others, and these others beget others again, until this series of inter-connected deeds leads by an apparently inevitable sequence to a catastrophe. The effect of such a series on imagination is to make us regard the sufferings which accompany it, and the catastrophe in which it ends, not only or chiefly as something which happens to the persons concerned, but equally as something which is caused by them. This at least may be said of the principal persons, and, among them, of the hero, who always contributes in some measure to the disaster in which he perishes.

This second aspect of tragedy evidently differs greatly from the first. Men, from this point of view, appear to us primarily as agents, 'themselves the authors of their proper woe'; and our fear and pity, though they will not cease or diminish, will be modified accordingly. We are now to consider this second aspect, remembering that it too is only one aspect, and additional to the first, not a substitute for it.

The 'story' or 'action' of a Shakespearean tragedy does not consist, of course, solely of human actions or deeds; but the deeds are the predominant factor. And these deeds are, for the most part, actions in the full sense of the word; not things done "tween sleep and wake', but acts or omissions thoroughly expressive of the doer,—characteristic deeds. The centre of the tragedy, therefore, may be said with equal truth to lie in action issuing from character, or in character issuing in action.

Shakespeare's main interest lay here. To say that it lay in *mere* character, or was a psychological interest, would be a great mistake, for he was dramatic to the tips of his fingers. It is possible to find places where he has given a certain indulgence to his love of poetry, and even to his turn for general reflections; but it would be very difficult, and in his later tragedies perhaps impossible, to detect passages where he has allowed such freedom to the

interest in character apart from action. But for the opposite extreme, for the abstraction of mere 'plot' (which is a very different thing from the tragic 'action'), for the kind of interest which predominates in a novel like *The Woman in White*, it is clear that he cared even less. I do not mean that this interest is absent from his dramas; but it is subordinate to others, and it is so interwoven with them that we are rarely conscious of it apart, and rarely feel in any great strength the half-intellectual, half-nervous excitement of following an ingenious complication. What we do feel strongly, as a tragedy advances to its close, is that the calamities and catastrophe follow inevitably from the deeds of men, and that the main source of these deeds is character. The dictum that, with Shakespeare, 'character is destiny' is no doubt an exaggeration, and one that may mislead (for many of his tragic personages, if they had not met with peculiar circumstances, would have escaped a tragic end, and might even have lived fairly untroubled lives); but it is the exaggeration of a vital truth.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH. (*Shakespeare*. 1907.)

The vision, as it was seen by Shakespeare, is so solemn, and terrible, and convincing in its reality, that there are few, perhaps, among his readers, who have not averted or covered their eyes. 'I might relate', says Johnson, 'that I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.' For the better part of a century the feelings of playgoers were spared by alterations in the acting version. With readers of the play other protective devices have found favour. These events, they have been willing to believe, are a fable designed by Shakespeare to illustrate the possible awful consequences of error and thoughtlessness. Such things never happened; or, if they happened, at least we can be careful, and they never need happen again. So the reader takes refuge in morality, from motives not of pride, but of terror, because morality is within man's reach. The breaking of a bridge from faulty construction excites none of the panic fear that is produced by an earthquake.

But here we have to do with an earthquake, and good conduct is of no avail. Morality is not denied; it is overwhelmed and tossed aside by the inrush of the sea. There is no moral lesson to be read, except accidentally, in any of Shakespeare's tragedies. They deal with greater things than man; with powers and passions, elemental forces, and dark abysses of suffering; with the central fire, which breaks through the thin crust of civilisation, and makes a splendour in the sky above the blackness of ruined homes. Because he is a poet, and has a true imagination, Shakespeare knows how precarious is man's tenure of the soil, how deceitful are his quiet orderly habits and his prosaic speech. At any moment, by the operation of chance, or fate, these things may be broken up, and the world given over once more to the forces that struggled in chaos.

It is not true to say that in these tragedies character is destiny. Othello

is not a jealous man; he is a man carried off his feet, wave-drenched and blinded by the passion of love. Macbeth is not a murderous politician; he is a man possessed. Lear no doubt has faults; he is irritable and exacting, and the price that he pays for these weaknesses of old age is that they let loose hell. Hamlet is sensitive, thoughtful, generous, impulsive,—'a pure, noble, and most moral nature'—yet he does not escape the extreme penalty, and at the bar of a false criticism he too is made guilty of the catastrophe. But Shakespeare, who watched his heroes, awestruck, as he saw them being drawn into the gulf, passed no such judgment on them. In his view of it, what they suffer is out of all proportion to what they do and are. They are presented with a choice, and the essence of the tragedy is that choice is impossible. Coriolanus has to choose between the pride of his country and the closest of human affections. Antony stands poised between love and empire. Macbeth commits a foul crime; but Shakespeare's tragic stress is laid on the hopelessness of the dilemma that follows, and his great pity for mortality makes the crime a lesser thing. Hamlet fluctuates between the thought which leads nowhither and the action which is narrow and profoundly unsatisfying. Brutus, like Coriolanus, has to choose between his highest political hopes and the private ties of humanity. Lear's misdoing is forgotten in the doom that falls upon him; after his fit of jealous anger he awakes to find that he has no further choice, and is driven into the wilderness, a scapegoat for mankind. Othello—but the story of Othello exemplifies a further reach of Shakespeare's fearful irony—Othello, like Hamlet, suffers for his very virtues, and the noblest qualities of his mind are made the instruments of his crucifixion.

TOLSTOY. (*Shakespeare and the Drama.* 1906. Trans. Aylmer Maude.)

I remember the astonishment I felt when I first read Shakespeare. I had expected to receive a great esthetic pleasure, but on reading, one after another, the works regarded as his best, *King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth,* not only did I not experience pleasure but I felt an insuperable repulsion and tedium, and a doubt whether I lacked sense, since I considered works insignificant and simply bad, which are regarded as the summit of perfection by the whole educated world; or whether the importance that educated world attributed to Shakespeare's works lacks sense. My perplexity was increased by the fact that I have always keenly felt the beauties of poetry in all its forms: why then did Shakespeare's works, recognised by the whole world as works of artistic genius, not only fail to please me, but even seem detestable? I long distrusted my judgment, and to check my conclusions, during fifty years, I repeatedly set to work to read Shakespeare in all possible forms—in Russian, in English, and in German in Schlegel's translation, as I was advised to. I read the tragedies, comedies, and historical plays, several times over, and I invariably experienced the same feelings—repulsion, weariness, and bewilderment. Now, before writing this article, as an old man of 75, wishing once more to check my conclusions, I have again read the whole of Shakespeare, including the historical plays, the *Henrys,*

Troilus and Cressida, *The Tempest*, and *Cymbeline*, etc., and have experienced the same feeling still more strongly, no longer with perplexity but with a firm indubitable conviction that the undisputed fame Shakespeare enjoys as a great genius, which makes writers of our time imitate him and readers and spectators, distorting their esthetic and ethical sense, seek non-existent qualities in him, is a great evil—as every falsehood is. . . .

But not only are the characters in Shakespeare's plays placed in tragic positions which are quite impossible, do not result from the course of events, and are inappropriate to the period and the place, but they also behave in a way not in accord with their own definite characters and that is quite arbitrary. . . .

From the very beginning of reading any of Shakespeare's plays I was at once convinced that it was perfectly evident that he is lacking in the chief, if not the sole, means of portraying character, which is individuality of language—that each person should speak in a way suitable to his own character. That is lacking in Shakespeare. All his characters speak, not a language of their own but always one and the same Shakespearean, affected, unnatural language, which not only could they not speak, but which no real people could ever have spoken anywhere. . . .

Shakespeare's characters continually do and say what is not merely unnatural to them but quite unnecessary. I will not cite examples of this, for I think that a man who does not himself perceive this striking defect in all Shakespeare's dramas will not be convinced by any possible examples or proofs. It is sufficient to read *King Lear* alone, with the madness, the murders, the plucking out of eyes, Gloucester's jump, the poisonings, and the torrents of abuse—not to mention *Pericles*, *A Winter's Tale*—or *The Tempest*, to convince oneself of this. Only a man quite devoid of the sense of proportion and taste could produce the types of *Titus Andronicus* and *Troilus and Cressida*, and so mercilessly distort the old drama of *King Lear*. . . .

The content of Shakespeare's plays, as is seen by the explanations of his greatest admirers, is the lowest, most vulgar view of life, which regards the external elevation of the great ones of the earth as a genuine superiority; despises the crowd, that is to say, the working classes; and repudiates not only religious, but even any humanitarian, efforts directed towards the alteration of the existing order of society.

The second condition is also absent in Shakespeare except in his handling of scenes in which a movement of feeling is expressed. There is in his works a lack of naturalness in the situations, the characters lack individuality of speech, and a sense of proportion is also wanting, without which such works cannot be artistic.

The third and chief condition—sincerity—is totally absent in all Shakespeare's works. One sees in all of them an intentional artificiality; it is obvious that he is not in earnest but is playing with words. . . .

There is only one explanation of this astonishing fame: it is one of those epidemic suggestions to which people always have been and are liable. . . .

So that the first cause of Shakespeare's fame was that the Germans wanted to oppose something freer and more alive to the French drama of which they

were tired, and which was really dull and cold. The second cause was that the young German writers required a model for their own dramas. The third and chief cause was the activity of the learned and zealous esthetic German critics who lacked esthetic feeling and formulated the theory of objective art, that is to say, deliberately repudiated the religious essence of the drama. . . .

A series of accidents brought it about that Goethe at the beginning of the last century, being the dictator of philosophic thought and esthetic laws, praised Shakespeare; the esthetic critics caught up that praise and began to write their long foggy erudite articles, and the great European public began to be enchanted by Shakespeare. The critics, responding to this public interest, laboriously vied with one another in writing fresh and fresh articles about Shakespeare, and readers and spectators were still further confirmed in their enthusiasm, and Shakespeare's fame kept growing and growing like a snowball, until in our time it has attained a degree of insane laudation that obviously rests on no other basis than suggestion. . . .

But above all, having assimilated that immoral view of life which permeates all Shakespeare's works he (a young man) loses the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. And the error of extolling an insignificant, inartistic, and not only non-moral but plainly immoral writer, accomplishes its pernicious work.

That is why I think that the sooner people emancipate themselves from this false worship of Shakespeare the better it will be—first because people when they are freed from this falsehood will come to understand that a drama which has no religious basis is not only not an important or good thing, as is now supposed, but is a most trivial and contemptible affair. And having understood this they will have to search for and work out a new form of modern drama—a drama which will serve for the elucidation and confirmation in man of the highest degree of religious consciousness. And secondly, because people when themselves set free from this hypnotic state, will understand that the insignificant and immoral works of Shakespeare and his imitators, aiming only at distracting and amusing the spectators, cannot possibly serve to teach the meaning of life, but that, as long as there is no real religious drama, guidance for life must be looked for from other sources.

LYTTON STRACHEY. (*Landmarks in French Literature.*)

English dramatic literature is, of course, dominated by Shakespeare; and it is almost inevitable that an English reader should measure the value of other poetic drama by the standards which Shakespeare has already implanted in his mind. But, after all, Shakespeare himself was but the product and the crown of a particular dramatic convention; he did not compose his plays according to an ideal pattern; he was an Elizabethan, working so consistently according to the methods of his age and country that, as we know, he passed 'unguessed at' among his contemporaries. But what were these methods and this convention? To judge of them properly we must look, not at Shake-

speare's masterpieces, for they are transfused and consecrated with the light of transcendent genius, but at the average play of an ordinary Elizabethan playwright, or even at one of the lesser works of Shakespeare himself. And, if we look here, it will become apparent that the dramatic tradition of the Elizabethan age was an extremely faulty one. It allowed, it is true, of great richness, great variety, and the sublimest heights of poetry; but it also allowed of an almost incredible looseness of structure and vagueness of purpose, of dullness, of insipidity, and of bad taste. The genius of the Elizabethans was astonishing, but it was genius struggling with difficulties which were well-nigh insuperable; and, as a matter of fact, in spite of their amazing poetic and dramatic powers, their work has vanished from the stage, and is to-day familiar to but a few of the lovers of English literature. Shakespeare alone was not subdued to what he worked in. His overwhelming genius harmonised and ennobled the discordant elements of the Elizabethan tradition, and invested them not only with immortality, but with immortality understanded of the people. His greatest works will continue to be acted and applauded so long as there is a theatre in England. But even Shakespeare himself was not always successful. One has only to look at some of his secondary plays—at *Troilus and Cressida*, for instance, or *Timon of Athens*—to see at once how inveterate and malignant were the diseases to which the dramatic methods of the Elizabethans were a prey. Wisdom and poetry are intertwined with flatness and folly; splendid situations drift purposeless to impotent conclusions; brilliant psychology alternates with the grossest indecency and the feeblest puns. 'O matter and impertinency mixed!' one is inclined to exclaim at such a spectacle. And then one is blinded once more by the glamour of *Lear* and *Othello*; one forgets the defective system in the triumph of a few exceptions, and all plays seem intolerable unless they were written on the principle which produced *Pericles* and *Titus Andronicus* and the whole multitude of distorted and disordered works of genius of the Elizabethan age.

Racine's principles were, in fact, the direct opposite of these. 'Comprehension' might be taken as the watchword of the Elizabethans; Racine's was 'concentration'. His great aim was to produce, not an extraordinary nor a complex work of art, but a flawless one; he wished to be all matter and no impertinency. His conception of a drama was of something swift, simple, inevitable; an action taken at the crisis, with no redundancies however interesting, no complications however suggestive, no irrelevances however beautiful—but plain, intense, vigorous, and splendid with nothing but its own essential force. Nor can there be any doubt that Racine's view of what a drama should be has been justified by the subsequent history of the stage. The Elizabethan tradition has died out—or rather it has left the theatre, and become absorbed in the modern novel; and it is the drama of crisis—such as Racine conceived it—which is now the accepted model of what a stage-play should be. And, in this connection, we may notice an old controversy, which still occasionally raises its head in the waste places of criticism—the question of the three unities. In this controversy both sides have been content to repeat arguments which are in reality irrelevant and futile. It is irrelevant to consider whether the unities were or were not prescribed by Aristotle; and

it is futile to ask whether the sense of probability is or is not more shocked by the scenic representation of an action of thirty-six hours than by one of twenty-four. The value of the unities does not depend either upon their traditional authority or—to use the French expression—upon their *vraisemblance*. Their true importance lies simply in their being a powerful means towards concentration. Thus it is clear that in an absolute sense they are neither good nor bad; their goodness or badness depends upon the kind of result which the dramatist is aiming at. If he wishes to produce a drama of the Elizabethan type—a drama of comprehension—which shall include as much as possible of the varied manifestations of human life, then obviously the observance of the unities must exercise a restricting and narrowing influence which would be quite out of place. On the other hand, in a drama of crisis they are not only useful but almost inevitable. If a crisis is to be a real crisis it must not drag on indefinitely; it must not last for more than a few hours, or—to put a rough limit—for more than a single day; in fact, the unity of time must be preserved. Again, if the action is to pass quickly, it must pass in one place, for there will be no time for the movement of the characters elsewhere; thus the unity of place becomes a necessity. Finally, if the mind is to be concentrated to the full upon a particular crisis, it must not be distracted by side issues; the event, and nothing but the event, must be displayed; in other words, the dramatist will not succeed in his object unless he employs the unity of action.

T. S. Eliot. (*Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*. 1927.)

The last few years have witnessed a number of recrudescences of Shakespeare. There is the fatigued Shakespeare, a retired Anglo-Indian, presented by Mr. Lytton Strachey; there is the messianic Shakespeare, bringing a new philosophy and a new system of yoga, presented by Mr. Middleton Murry; and there is the ferocious Shakespeare, a furious Samson, presented by Mr. Wyndham Lewis in his interesting book, *The Lion and the Fox*. On the whole, we may all agree that these manifestations are beneficial. In any case, so important as that of Shakespeare, it is good that we should from time to time change our minds. The last conventional Shakespeare is banished from the scene, and a variety of unconventional Shakespeares take his place. About anyone so great as Shakespeare, it is probable that we can never be right; and if we can never be right, it is better that we should from time to time change our way of being wrong. Whether Truth ultimately prevails is doubtful and has never been proved; but it is certain that nothing is more effective in driving out error than a new error. Whether Mr. Strachey, or Mr. Murry, or Mr. Lewis, is any nearer to the truth of Shakespeare than Rymer, Morgann, or Webster, or Johnson, is uncertain; they are all certainly more sympathetic in this year 1927 than Coleridge, or Swinburne, or Dowden. If they do not give us the real Shakespeare—if there is one—they at least give us several up-to-date Shakespeares. If the only way to prove that Shakespeare did not feel and think exactly as people felt and thought in

1815, or in 1860, or in 1880, is to show that he felt and thought as we felt and thought in 1927, then we must accept gratefully that alternative. . . .

That Shakespeare deliberately took a 'view of life' from Seneca there seems to be no evidence whatever.

Nevertheless, there is, in some of the great tragedies of Shakespeare, a new attitude. It is not the attitude of Seneca, but it is derived from Seneca; it is slightly different from anything that can be found in French tragedy, in Corneille or in Racine; it is modern, and it culminates, if there is ever any culmination, in the attitude of Nietzsche. I cannot say that it is Shakespeare's 'philosophy'. Yet, many people have lived by it; though it may only have been Shakespeare's instinctive recognition of something of theatrical utility. It is the attitude of self-dramatization assumed by some of Shakespeare's heroes at moments of tragic intensity. It is not peculiar to Shakespeare; it is conspicuous in Chapman: Bussy, Clermont and Biron, all die in this way. Marston—one of the most interesting and least explored of all the Elizabethans—uses it; and Marston and Chapman were particularly Senecan. But Shakespeare, of course, does it very much better than any of the others, and makes it somehow more integral with the human nature of his characters. It is less verbal, more real. . . .

It is this general notion of 'thinking' that I would challenge. One has the difficulty of having to use the same words for different things. We say, in a vague way, that Shakespeare, or Dante, or Lucretius, is a poet who thinks, and that Swinburne is a poet who does not think, even that Tennyson is a poet who does not think. But what we really mean is not a difference in quality of thought, but a difference in quality of emotion. The poet who 'thinks' is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought. But he is not necessarily interested in the thought itself. We talk as if thought was precise and emotion was vague. In reality there is precise emotion and there is vague emotion. To express precise emotion requires as great intellectual power as to express precise thought. But by 'thinking' I mean something very different from anything that I find in Shakespeare. Mr. Lewis, and other champions of Shakespeare as a great philosopher, have a great deal to say about Shakespeare's power of thought, but they fail to show that he thought to any purpose; that he had any coherent view of life, or that he recommended any procedure to follow. 'We possess a great deal of evidence', says Mr. Lewis, 'as to what Shakespeare thought of military glory and martial events.' Do we? Or rather, did Shakespeare think anything at all? He was occupied with turning human actions into poetry.

I would suggest that none of the plays of Shakespeare has a 'meaning', although it would be equally false to say that a play of Shakespeare is meaningless. All great poetry gives the illusion of a view of life. When we enter into the world of Homer, or Sophocles, or Virgil, or Dante, or Shakespeare, we incline to believe that we are apprehending something that can be expressed intellectually; for every precise emotion tends towards intellectual formulation.

E. E. Stoll. (*Art and Artifice in Shakespeare.* 1934.)

Drama, therefore, if we are to judge of it from the foregoing, is no 'document'. (Not a social document, of course—that question has not here arisen—but not even a 'human' one.) Most of the misinterpretation of it, whether that of Shakespeare or of Æschylus, has been more or less due to our taking it to be such. Whether as story or as character, it is, as Mr. Bridges says of Shakespeare's alone, 'not nature in the sense of being susceptible of the same analysis as that by which the assumptions of science would investigate nature'; and the tendency so to conceive of it is really the same spirit of literalism that prompted the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century critics to establish the canon of the unities—the consideration that they afford, not (as they do) a more compact and effective structure, but a greater *vraisemblance*. The human figures certainly are not, as a recent writer has declared them to be, 'copied with little alteration from the population of the world'; and thank Heaven that they are not. Still less are they examples or illustrations of our psychology. But they are not always even perfect copies of the inner vision, that 'higher reality' which, as Goethe observes, great art represents. They are a compromise, an accommodation, a simplification, to suit the structure and particular conception of the whole. 'The spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimility', says Dryden, echoing Aristotle; but only verisimility is what art, drama, and more especially, among great drama, that of Shakespeare, bestow. It is not reality, or even perfect consistency, but an illusion, and, above all, an illusion whereby the spirit of man shall be moved. The greatest of dramatists is careful, not so much for the single character, as for the drama; indeed, he observes not so much the probabilities of the action, or the psychology of the character, as the psychology of the audience, for whom both action and character are framed. Writing hastily, but impetuously, to be played, not read, he seizes upon almost every means of imitation and opportunity for excitement which this large liberty affords. For everything he would give us, not only (in effect) life as we know it is, but (and far more) drama as we would have it be; yet remembers, no man so constantly, that the attention of his audience—the liberty of his art—has limits. Like all dramatists, he must have a situation; like all the greater dramatists, an intense one. He would, as would Dryden, 'work up the pity to a greater height'. Therefore, like them, he has, necessarily, had to start with premises or postulates, and provoke intrusions, human or super-human, whereby the hero, still keeping our sympathy, can be put in a plight. And just because of the largeness of the undertaking—the whole story and an old one, many characters and situations, and times and places, not a few, and all the form and pressure, sound and colour, of existence—he has necessarily had—for consistency of illusion, swiftness of movement, and intensity of effect—to contrive more audaciously and variously, and (in turn) to make such amends or adjustments as he could, sometimes even by artifices which are scarcely art. He evades and hedges, he manœuvres and manipulates, he suppresses or obscures. But his most noble and effectual amends is positive—his poetry. The premise sets him free for it—*præcipitandus est liber spiritus*—and he

walks not soberly afoot, like your philosopher, but flies. And Shakespeare is the greatest of dramatists because the illusion he offers is the widest and highest, the emotion he arouses the most irresistible and overwhelming.

By poetry, an imaginative conquest, he works the wonder—by rhythm and recurrence, acceleration and retardation, swelling and subsidence, and this in the structure, the rhetoric, or the metre; also (for obviously drama is not music) by the seizing and ordering of such thoughts and sentiments, such words and images, as belong together, though never together in this world before; and (above all) in the characters, by both the one process and the other—and who knows by what other besides?—as a vitalising, differentiating power. His imitation is creation; what with us is dull and solid fact, assumes, still recognizable, the potency and liberty of fiction. So it is, in some measure, with the Greeks as well, and with Racine and Ibsen, who one and all are poets, yet not in such signal and pre-eminent measure, not to such dramatic—both airy and substantial—effect. They have less amends to make, but less resources wherewith to make them. Shakespeare's characters, more unmistakably than anyone else's, are, from the outset, given voices, accents, of their own—and not individual only, but beautiful—a fact which inveigles us, throughout the play, and even (witness the critics) afterwards, into accepting, not them only, but also the incredible things that they not infrequently do. They speak—like human beings, though none we know or hear of—*therefore* they are; and then, if for nothing else, their story is—'for the moment'—credible.

CAROLINE SPURGEON. (*Shakespeare's Imagery*. 1935.)

It has not, so far as I know, ever yet been noticed that recurrent images play a part in raising, developing, sustaining, and repeating emotion in the tragedies, which is somewhat analogous to the action of a recurrent theme or 'motif' in a musical fugue or sonata, or in one of Wagner's operas.

Perhaps, however, a more exact analogy to the function of Shakespeare's images in this respect is the unique work of another great artist, of the peculiar quality of which they constantly remind one, that is, Blake's illustrations to his prophetic books. These are not, for the most part, illustrations in the ordinary sense of the term, the translation by the artist of some incident in the narrative into a visual picture; they are rather a running accompaniment to the words in another medium, sometimes symbolically emphasizing or interpreting certain aspects of the thought, sometimes supplying frankly only decoration or atmosphere, sometimes grotesque and even repellent, vivid, strange, arresting, sometimes drawn with an almost unearthly beauty of form and colour. Thus, as the leaping tongues of flame which illuminate the pages of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* show the visual form which Blake's thought evoked in his mind, and symbolize for us the purity, the beauty, and the two-edged quality of life and danger in his words, so the recurrent images in *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* reveal the dominant picture or sensation—and for Shakespeare the two are identical—in terms of which he sees and feels the

main problem or theme of the play, thus giving us an unerring clue to the way he looked at it, as well as a direct glimpse into the working of his mind and imagination.

These dominating images are a characteristic of Shakespeare's work throughout, but whereas in the earlier plays they are often rather obvious and of set design, taken over in some cases with the story itself from a hint in the original narrative; in the later plays, and especially in the great tragedies, they are born of the emotions of the theme, and are, as in *Macbeth*, subtle, complex, varied, but intensely vivid and revealing; or as in *Lear*, so constant and all-pervading as to be reiterated, not only in the word-pictures, but also in the single words themselves.

Any reader, of course, must be aware of certain recurrent symbolic imagery in Shakespeare, such as that of a tree and its branches, and of planting, lopping, or rooting up, which runs through the English historical plays; they are conscious of the imaginative effect of the animal imagery in *Lear*, or of the flash of explosives in *Romeo and Juliet*, but it was not until the last few years, when in the course of an intensive study of Shakespeare's imagery I had listed and classified and card-indexed and counted every image in every play thrice over, that the actual facts as to these dominating pictures stared me in the face.

I found that there is a certain range of images, and roughly a certain proportion of these, to be expected in every play, and that certain familiar categories, of nature, animals, and what one may call 'everyday' or 'domestic', easily come first. But in addition to this normal grouping, I have found, especially in the tragedies, certain groups of images which, as it were, stick out in each particular play and immediately attract attention because they are peculiar either in subject or quantity, or both.

These seem to form the floating image or images in Shakespeare's mind called forth by that particular play, and I propose now, as briefly as possible, just to look at the tragedies from the point of view of these groups of images only.

In *Romeo and Juliet* the beauty and ardour of young love is seen by Shakespeare as the irradiating glory of sunlight and starlight in a dark world. The dominating image is *light*, every form and manifestation of it; the sun, moon, stars, fire, lightning, the flash of gunpowder, and the reflected light of beauty and of love; while by contrast we have night, darkness, clouds, rain, mist, and smoke. . . .

In *Hamlet*, naturally, we find ourselves in an entirely different atmosphere, and if we look closely we see this is partly due to the number of images of sickness, disease, or blemish of the body in the play, and we discover that the idea of an ulcer or tumour, as descriptive of the unwholesome condition of Denmark morally, is, on the whole, the dominating one.

CHAPTER X

THE PLAYS AND THEIR CRITICS

IN the following pages the plays are printed in chronological order, or at least in an order which must approximate to that in which they were written. The sequence is, however, not absolutely certain: for instance, some would put *Julius Cæsar* before, and others after *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, and it is difficult to place exactly *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All's Well*, and *Timon of Athens*. There is no other play that can be dated as accurately as *Henry V* with its references to Essex's Irish expedition of 1599, but for most of the plays it is possible to fix dates between which they must have been written. For example, if a play is mentioned by Meres it must have been written before September 7th, 1598, when his *Palladis Tamia* was registered; if it is not mentioned it is probable that it was written after that date. For the plays published as Quartos precise final dates are fixed by entries in the Stationers' Register, less precise ones by the year of publication on the title page. Other external evidence of final dates is afforded by the records of performances and by contemporary mention. Internal evidence fixing an initial date after which a play must have been written is sometimes given by topical allusions: for instance, the reference in *King Lear* to the eclipses of the sun and moon in the autumn of 1605. Where such evidence is meagre or lacking the date has to be decided on stylistic grounds, and this is where the research of nineteenth-century scholars into Shakespeare's verse has been invaluable—and also where there is occasion for dispute.

The evidence may be summarised as follows:

Evidence that a play was written—	*before a certain date:*	*after a certain date:*
External:	Mention by Meres. Other contemporary mention. Record of performance. Entry in Stationers' Register. Title page of Q.	No mention by Meres.
Internal:	Style.	Topical allusions. Style.

Thus *Troilus and Cressida* is not mentioned by Meres and was registered on February 7th, 1603, and was probably written, therefore, between 1598 and

the end of 1602; on stylistic grounds it is placed immediately after *Hamlet*. On the other hand there is no certain evidence for the date of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

WRITTEN. Though the sequence as a whole is tolerably settled, it is not easy to fix exact dates of composition, and the years given must generally be taken as approximate: *Macbeth*, for instance, may have been written any time between 1606 and 1608. Before 1600 Shakespeare wrote an average of two plays a year, after 1600 only one play a year.

PERFORMED. The most valuable records of early performances are those in Philip Henslowe's *Diary* between 1592 and 1594, when Shakespeare was writing for a number of companies in which Henslowe had an interest; and after 1594, when he wrote entirely for the Chamberlain's Company, in the *Revels Accounts* of Court performances in 1604-5 and 1611-12.

S.R. This refers to the compulsory entry in the Stationers' Register before publication. All Shakespeare's plays that were issued as Quartos were entered, though not always before publication (see p. 201). The plays printed for the first time in the Folio, except *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were entered by Blount and Jaggard on November 8th, 1623 (see p. 200).

MERES. The *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres was registered on September 7th, 1598, and published shortly afterwards. He mentions twelve plays as being by Shakespeare: six comedies and six tragedies. He omits the three parts of *Henry VI*, possibly because he wished to preserve the nicely balanced antithesis between comedy and tragedy. '*Loue labours wonne*' probably refers to *The Taming of the Shrew*. He also mentions *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets* then circulating among Shakespeare's 'priuate friends'. (See p. 267.)

SOURCES. The following table indicates the chief sources used by Shakespeare:

1590.	2 Henry VI.	Holinshed.
	3 Henry VI.	Holinshed.
1591.	1 Henry VI.	Holinshed.
1592.	Richard III.	Holinshed.
	Titus Andronicus.	Uncertain.
1593.	Comedy of Errors.	Plautus: *Menæchmi*.
	Two Gentlemen of Verona.	Montemayor: *Diana Enamorada*.
1594.	Love's Labour's Lost.	Shakespeare.
1595.	Romeo and Juliet.	Arthur Brooke: *Romeus and Juliet*.
	Richard II.	Holinshed.
1596.	Taming of the Shrew.	*Taming of a Shrew* (anon.).
	Midsummer Night's Dream.	Shakespeare.
597.	King John.	*The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn* (anon.)
	Merchant of Venice.	Ser Giovanni: *Il Pecorone*.

1597.	1 Henry IV.	Holinshed and *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (anon.).
1598.	2 Henry IV.	Holinshed and *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (anon.).
	Merry Wives of Windsor.	Shakespeare.
1599.	Henry V.	Holinshed, and *The Famous Victories.*
	Much Ado about Nothing.	Bandello: *Timbreo and Fenicia.*
1600.	As You Like It.	Thomas Lodge: *Rosalynde.*
	Twelfth Night.	Riche: *Apolonius and Silla.*
1601.	Julius Cæsar.	Plutarch: *Lives.*
	Hamlet.	Belleforest: *Histoires Tragiques.*
1602.	Troilus and Cressida.	Chaucer: *Troilus and Criseyde.*
1603.	All's Well.	Boccaccio: *Giglietta di Nerbona.*
	Measure for Measure.	Whetstone: *Promos and Cassandra.*
1604.	Othello.	Cinthio: *Hecatommithi.*
1605.	Timon of Athens.	Plutarch: *Lives.*
1606.	King Lear.	*King Leir*, an anonymous play.
	Macbeth.	Holinshed.
1607.	Antony and Cleopatra.	Plutarch: *Lives.*
	Coriolanus.	Plutarch: *Lives.*
(1608.	Pericles.	Gower: *Apollonius of Tyre.*)
1609.	Cymbeline.	Boccaccio: *Decameron*, and Holinshed.
1610.	Winter's Tale.	Robert Greene: *Pandosto.*
1611.	The Tempest.	Jourdan: *A Discovery of the Bermudas.*
1612.	Henry VIII.	Holinshed.
(1613.	Two Noble Kinsmen.	Chaucer: *The Knight's Tale.*)

Shakespeare, like the other Elizabethan dramatists, rarely invented his plots. There was an urgent demand for new plays, and if they were to be turned out quickly an obvious method of saving time was to work up a ready-made story. This Shakespeare did, and it will be seen that he drew on four main sources for his material: old plays, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and romances derived from the Italian Novel.

The old anonymous plays of *The Taming of a Shrew*, *The Troublesome Reign of John*, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, and *King Leir and his Three Daughters* were all pressed into service, but for their plots only; there is no resemblance between their texts and those that Shakespeare made from them. They are completely rewritten, new characters are added, the action is made dramatic, and the plot itself of *King Leir* is radically altered. In *The Famous Victories* the secondary plot of *Henry IV* is crudely sketched, as is the character of Sir John Oldcastle, the original, if such a shadowy figure may so be called, of Falstaff. Here is a short scene from the old play:

Hen. But Ned, so soone as I am King, the first thing I wil do, shal be to put my Lord chiefe Iustice out of office. And thou shalt be my Lord chiefe Iustice of England.

Ned. Shall I be Lord chiefe Iustice?

By gogs wounds, ile be the brauest Lord chiefe Iustice of England.

Hen. Then Ned, Ile turne all these prisons into fence Schooles, and I will endue thee with them, with landes to maintaine them withall: then I wil haue a bout with my Lord chiefe Iustice, thou shalt hang none but picke purses and horse stealers, and such base minded villaines, but that fellow that wil stand by the high way side couragiously with his sword and buckler and take a purse, that fellow giue him commendations, beside that, send him to me and I wil giue him an anuall pension out of my Exchequer, to maintaine him all the dayes of his life.

Iohn. Nobly spoken Harry, we shall neuer haue a mery world til the old king be dead.

It used to be thought that 2, 3 *Henry VI* as printed in the Folio were adaptations by Shakespeare of other men's work, *The First Part of the Contention*, and *The True Tragedy*, but it now seems certain that these Quartos were pirated editions of Shakespeare's own text. All the evidence goes to show that when Shakespeare used a play as a source he did not merely patch and adapt it, he rewrote it.

Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* were published in 1578 and contained inexhaustible material to satisfy the feverish nationalism of London citizens, and Shakespeare made use of it in all his Histories, and in two Tragedies and a Romance as well. But Holinshed supplied only the framework: the language, the characterisation, and many of the characters themselves are Shakespeare's; he found no material for the sub-plot of *Henry IV* in Holinshed and little for the Hotspur theme. The only hint for the passage quoted from 1 *Henry IV* on p. 150 is:

The Persies with this answer and fraudulent excuse were not a little fumed, insomuch that Henry Hotspur said openlie: 'Behold, the heire of the relme is robbed of his right, and yet the robber with his owne will not redeeme him!' So in this furie the Persies departed, minding nothing more than to depose king Henrie from the high type of his royaltie.

Only when bored or uninspired did Shakespeare transcribe Holinshed at length, as in the tedious dissertation on the 'law Salike', and the list of prisoners in *Henry V*.

Plutarch, however, is another matter. Sir Thomas North's translation of Amyot's French version of Plutarch had appeared in 1579 as *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, so that Shakespeare must have been acquainted with the book from his youth. When therefore he turned from comedy and history to the tragedy of character it was natural that he should turn to Plutarch's dramatic biographies and North's inspiring prose. Sometimes he would borrow an anecdote or an incident, as in *Timon of Athens* (cf. p. 158):

'My Lords of Athens, I have a little yard in my house where there groweth a fig tree, on the which many citizens have hanged themselves: and, because I mean to make some building on the place, I thought good to let you all understand it, that, before the fig tree be cut down, if any of you be desperate, you may there in time go hang yourselves.' He died in the city of Halæ, and was buried upon the seaside.

Sometimes a few words appear to inspire a whole passage, like Charmian's in North's movingly simple account of Cleopatra's death (cf. p. 160, but note the magic of Shakespeare's final touch, 'Ah, soldier!')

Her death was very sudden. For those whom Cæsar sent unto her ran thither in all haste possible, and found the soldiers standing at the gate, mistrusting nothing, nor understanding of her death. But when they had opened the doors they found Cleopatra stark dead, laid upon a bed of gold, attired and arrayed in her royal robes, and one of her two women, which was called Iras, dead at her feet: and her other woman called Charmion half-dead, and trembling, trimming the diadem which Cleopatra ware upon her head. One of the soldiers, seeing her, angrily said unto her: 'Is that well done, Charmion?' 'Very well', said she again, 'and meet for a princess descended from the race of so many noble kings.' She said no more, but fell down dead by the bed.

Sometimes Shakespeare would follow North closely and at length, as in the description of the meeting of Coriolanus and Aufidius (cf. p. 162).

It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney hearth, and sat him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house, spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance, and in his silence: whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the board, and, coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused a while, making no answer, he said unto him: 'If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and, seeing me, dost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity bewray myself to be that I am. I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volscians generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompense of all the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname: a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldst bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me: for the rest the envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance

of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor to take thy chimney hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For, if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to have put my life in hazard: but pricked forward with spite and desire I have to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, whom now I begin to be avenged on, putting my person between my enemies.

It is not often that Shakespeare follows as literally and lengthily as this, though North's noble account of 'the wonderful sumptuousness of Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, going unto Antonius', and Shakespeare's parallel passage are well known. Shakespeare's debt to North is a great one, and it would be ungracious to deny it, but it would be equally unfair to maintain that Shakespeare merely transcribed—even North: nearly always he adds some touch that transfigures the whole. That this is so, in one notable instance at least, is shown by Mr. Middleton Murry in his analysis of Enobarbus's speech quoted on p. 457.

Shakespeare's debt to the Italian novel is different. The light and flimsy stories could be adapted and woven together at pleasure: Claudio and Hero taken from Bandello, hints for Benedick and Beatrice perhaps extracted from Castiglione, while the humour of Dogberry 'he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks'; or to a mixture of Secchi, Bandello, and Cinthio, add Malvolio, Feste, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew, and the piercing poetry of Viola, and call it what you will; or Holinshed's *Chronicles* might richly and strangely be grafted on to the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. Here there is no question of transcription; the plots only are plundered, what is precious abstracted, then mingled, new situations and vital characters added, and the whole swept into a unity and integrated by the poetry and spirit of Shakespeare.

It is only what we should expect from genius in a hurry; Shakespeare thankfully accepted the materials, and if the foundations were partly laid and the scaffolding satisfactorily erected so much the better; but whatever the beginnings—an old play, Holinshed, an Italian or English novel, or one of Plutarch's *Lives*—the building, the work of art, was his own.

The quotations that follow the information given about each play are examples of eighteenth-century, Romantic, and either later nineteenth- or twentieth-century criticism, the representatives of the first two periods nearly always being Johnson, Coleridge, and Hazlitt, who give continuity and unity to the whole. In addition, when possible, there are extracts from contemporary and later seventeenth-century critics, notably Dryden, as well as from the rare and sensitive Lamb and de Quincey. There is variety in the criticism of the last hundred years, from Ulrici and Gervinus to Granville-Barker and Dover Wilson.

Unless otherwise stated, the extracts from Johnson are from his *General Observations on the Plays of Shakespeare*; those from Coleridge from *Notes and Lectures upon Shakspeare and some of the Old Dramatists*; and those from Hazlitt from *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*.

THE SHAKESPEAREAN CANON

The Plays of the First Folio, 1623

HENRY VI, PART II

WRITTEN: 1590.

PERFORMED: 1591?

S.R.: 1594 March 12 by Thomas Millington . . . 'the firste parte of the Contention'.
1602 April 19. Assigned by Millington to Thomas Pavier . . . 'The firste and Second parte of Henry the vj^d'.

PUBLISHED: 1594 Q1. 'The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster.' A 'bad' Quarto.
1602 Q2.
1619 Q3. 'The Whole Contention betweene the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke . . . Diuided into two Parts: And newly corrected and enlarged. Written by William Shakespeare, Gent.'
1623 F1. as 'The Second part of King Hen. the Sixt'. A third as long again as Qq.

MERES: Not mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: Mainly from Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

HENRY VI, PART III

WRITTEN: 1590.

PERFORMED: Before Sept. 1592 when Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit* parodied the line 'O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide'.[1]

[1] ROBERT GREENE. Yes trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.
Groats-worth of Wit, 1592.

S.R.: No original entry, but assigned by Millington to Pavier in 1602.

PUBLISHED: 1595 Q1. 'The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke . . . as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembrooke his seruants.' A 'bad' Quarto.
1600 Q2.
1619 Q3. Jaggard's reprint with 'The First Part of the Contention' as 'The Whole Contention'.
1623 F1. as 'The Third part of King Henry the sixt'. A third as long again as Qq.

MERES: Not mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: Mainly from Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

It used to be thought that *The First Part of the Contention* and the *True Tragedy* were old plays revised and expanded into the *Henry VI, Parts 2 and 3* of the Folio. It now seems clear, however, that they are 'bad' Quartos the texts of which were reproduced from memory by actors or a prompter (book-keeper), and that the Folio text is the original play printed probably from the author's MS. There may have been collaboration, but there is no reason why Shakespeare should not have been the sole author.

HENRY VI, PART I

WRITTEN: 1591.

PERFORMED: 1592. In his *Diary* Henslowe records a performance on March 3 of a new play, 'Harey the vj', performed by Lord Strange's Men, probably at the Rose. See also Nashe's reference below.

S.R.: 1623 Nov. 8. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before their publication of the Folio. It is entered sa 'The thirde parte of Henry ye Sixt', but the entry must refer to 1 *Henry VI*.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. as 'The First part of King Henry the Sixt'.

MERES: Not mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: Mainly from Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

There are a number of different styles in the play. Perhaps Shakespeare's part in it is confined to II. 4 and IV. 2.

THOMAS NASHE. How would it have ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least, (at seuerall times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding?

Pierce Penilesse, 1592.

JOHNSON. From mere inferiority nothing can be inferred; in the productions of wit there will be inequality. Sometimes judgment will err, and sometimes the matter itself will defeat the artist. Of every author's works one will be the best, and one will be the worst. The colours are not equally pleasing, nor the attitudes equally graceful, in all the pictures of Titian or Reynolds.

Dissimilitude of style, and heterogeneousness of sentiment, may sufficiently show that a work does not really belong to the reputed author. But in these plays no such marks of spuriousness are found. The diction, the versification, and the figures, are Shakespeare's. These plays, considered, without regard to characters and incidents, merely as narratives in verse, are more happily conceived, and more accurately finished, than those of King John, Richard II, or the tragic scenes of Henry IV and V. If we take these plays from Shakespeare, to whom shall they be given? What author of that age had the same easiness and fluency of numbers? . . .

Of these three plays I think the second the best. The truth is, that they have not sufficient variety of action, for the incidents are too often of the same kind; yet many of the characters are well discriminated. . . .

The old copies of the two latter parts of Henry VI and of Henry V are so apparently imperfect and mutilated, that there is no reason for supposing them the first draughts of Shakespeare. I am inclined to believe them copies taken by some auditor who wrote down, during the representation, what the time would permit, then, perhaps, filled up some of his omissions at a second or third hearing, and when he had by this method formed something like a play, sent it to the printer. (This is a remarkable anticipation of modern textual criticism.)

COLERIDGE. 1 Henry VI. Act i. sc. i. Bedford's speech:—

> Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky;

And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
That have consented unto Henry's death!
King Henry the fifth, too famous to live long!
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

Read aloud any two or three passages in blank verse even from Shakespeare's earliest dramas, as Love's Labour's Lost, or Romeo and Juliet; and then read in the same way this speech, with especial attention to the metre; and if you do not feel the impossibility of the latter having been written by Shakspeare, all I dare suggest is, that you may have ears,—for so has another animal,—but an ear you cannot have, *me judice*.

HAZLITT. During the time of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, England was a perfect bear-garden, and Shakespear has given us a very lively picture of the scene. The three parts of Henry VI convey a picture of very little else, and are inferior to the other historical plays. They have brilliant passages; but the general groundwork is comparatively poor and meagre, the style 'flat and unraised'.

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. And if we read the historical plays in the order of their composition, we are aware again of the same stupendous stride of genius. The four earliest of these, the three *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III*, are what the Patriot King called 'stuff'; they are woven of the stuff of the common Elizabethan drama, and whether Shakespeare really wrote them has been often doubted. And yet from my reading of these four plays I remember a few scenes which I feel he must have written —a few gleams through the morning mists from the 'glory hereafter to be revealed', from the sun still below the horizon, of his ascending genius. Touched by these gleams of dawn, I seem looming faintly, to borrow his own words,

The baby figure of the giant mass
Of things to come at large.

In the musings of the poor mild King in the third *Henry VI* play, on the happiness of the shepherd's lot (II, v), we find a soliloquy and a poetic day-dream that no one but Shakespeare could have written, and in the death of Cardinal Beaufort (*II Henry VI*, III, iii) the note of Shakespearean tragedy is first sounded in that scene of despair and dreadful death.[1] Cade in this play is almost a living figure, and even more alive is his derisive follower, Smith, 'the weaver', who, when Cade tells Sir Humphrey Stafford that his father was of royal blood, though stolen at birth and trained as a bricklayer, Smith ironically confirms this boast by declaring 'Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore deny it not' (IV, ii).

On Reading Shakespeare.

[1] See p. 140.

RICHARD III

WRITTEN: 1592.

PERFORMED: 1593 Dec. 30. The play of 'Buckingham' recorded by Henslowe in his *Diary* may refer to *Richard III*. It was not noted as 'new', and was performed by Sussex's Men.
1633. 'On Saterday, the 17th of Novemb. being the Queens birthday, Richarde the Thirde was acted by the K. players at St James, wher the king and queene were present, it being the first play the queene sawe since her Maiestys delivery of the Duke of York.'

S.R.: 1597 Oct 20 by Andrew Wise.
1603 transferred to Mathew Lawe.

PUBLISHED: 1597 Q1. 'As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants.'
1598 Q2. 'By William Shake-speare.'
1602 Q3. 'Newly augmented.'
1605 Q4, 1612 Q5. 'As it hath been lately Acted by the Kings Maiesties Seruants.'
1622 Q6.
1623 F1.
Each Q. is printed from its predecessor. F1 is printed from Q6 with reference to another source, possibly the original MS.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCE: Mainly Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

The authenticity of the play is doubted by the disintegrators. J. M. Robertson attributes it to Marlowe, Kyd, and Heywood, Shakespeare contributing only six or seven speeches. E. K. Chambers 'finds nothing here which might not be Shakespeare'.

In 1700 Colley Cibber adapted the play, adding more love-interest and violence, and his melodramatic version held the stage until quite recent times.

ANON. *Burbage.* I like your face, and the proportion of your body for *Richard* the 3. I pray, M. *Phil.* let me see you act a little of it.
Philomusus. 'Now is the winter of our discontent,
Made glorious summer by the sonne of Yorke.'
Returne from Parnassus II. (1601?)

JOHN MANNINGHAM. Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Rich. 3. there was a citizen greue soe farr in liking with him, that before shee went from the play shee appointed him to come that night vnto hir by

the name of Ri: the 3. Shakespeare overhearing their conclusion went before, was intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge came. Then message being brought that Rich. the 3d was at the dore, Shakespeare caused returne to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard the 3.

Diary, 1602.

JOHNSON. This is one of the most celebrated of our author's performances; yet I know not whether it has not happened to him as to others, to be praised most, when praise is not most deserved. That this play has scenes noble in themselves, and very well contrived to strike in the exhibition, cannot be denied. But some parts are trifling, others shocking, and some improbable.

THOMAS WHATELY. Thus, from the beginning of their history to their last moments, are the characters of Macbeth and Richard preserved entire and distinct: and though probably Shakespeare, when he was drawing the one, had no attention to the other; yet, as he conceived them to be widely different, expressed his conceptions exactly, and copied both from nature, they necessarily became contrasts to each other; and, by seeing them together, that contrast is more apparent, especially where the comparison is not between opposite qualities, but arises from the different degrees, or from a particular display, or total omission, of the same quality. This must often happen, as the character of Macbeth is much more complicated than that of Richard; and therefore, when they are set in opposition, the judgment of the poet shows itself as much in what he has left out of the latter as in what he has inserted. The picture of Macbeth is also, for the same reason, much the more highly finished of the two; for it required a greater variety, and a greater delicacy of painting, to express and to blend with consistency all the several properties which are ascribed to him. That of Richard is marked by more careless strokes, but they are, notwithstanding, perfectly just. Much bad composition may indeed be found in the part; it is a fault from which the best of Shakespeare's plays are not exempt, and with which this Play particularly abounds; and the taste of the age in which he wrote, though it may afford some excuse, yet cannot entirely vindicate the exceptionable passages. After every reasonable allowance, they must still remain blemishes ever to be lamented; but happily, for the most part, they only obscure, they do not disfigure his draughts from nature. Through whole speeches and scenes, character is often wanting; but in the worst instances of this kind, Shakespeare is but insipid; he is not inconsistent; and in his peculiar excellence of drawing characters, though he often neglects to exert his talents, he is very rarely guilty of perverting them.

Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespeare, 1785.

COLERIDGE. This play should be contrasted with Richard II. Pride of intellect is the characteristic of Richard, carried to the extent of even boasting to his own mind of his villany, whilst others are present to feed his pride of superiority. Shakspeare here, as in all his great parts, developes in a

tone of sublime morality the dreadful consequences of placing the moral, in subordination to the mere intellectual, being. In Richard there is a predominance of irony, accompanied with apparently blunt manners to those immediately about him, but formalized into a more set hypocrisy towards the people as represented by their magistrates.

HAZLITT. The Richard of Shakespear is towering and lofty; equally impetuous and commanding; haughty, violent, and subtle; bold and treacherous; confident in his strength as well as in his cunning; raised high by his birth, and higher by his talents and his crimes; a royal usurper, a princely hypocrite, a tyrant and a murderer of the house of Plantagenet.

> But I was born so high:
> Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
> And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.

The idea conveyed in these lines (which are indeed omitted in the miserable medley acted for Richard III) is never lost sight of by Shakespear, and should not be out of the actor's mind for a moment. The restless and sanguinary Richard is not a man striving to be great, but to be greater than he is; conscious of his strength of will, his power of intellect, his daring courage, his elevated station; and making use of these advantages to commit unheard-of crimes, and to shield himself from remorse and infamy. . . .

The manner in which Shakespear's plays have been generally altered or rather mangled by modern mechanists, is a disgrace to the English stage. The patch-work Richard III which is acted under the sanction of his name, and which was manufactured by Cibber, is a striking example of this remark.

The play itself is undoubtedly a very powerful effusion of Shakespear's genius. The ground-work of the character of Richard, that mixture of intellectual vigour with moral depravity, in which Shakespear delighted to show his strength—gave full scope as well as temptation to the exercise of his imagination.

LAMB. I am almost disposed to deny to Garrick the merit of being an admirer of Shakespeare. A true lover of his excellences he certainly was not; for would any true lover of them have admitted into his matchless scenes such ribald trash as Tate and Cibber, and the rest of them, that

> 'With their darkness durst affront his light',

have foisted into the acting plays of Shakespeare? I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakespeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in Richard III, in which Richard tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, 'if she survives this she is immortal'. Yet I doubt not he delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety of emphasis as any of the genuine parts: and for acting, it is as well calculated as any.

On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

SIR EDMUND CHAMBERS. Nor do I see any adequate reason for assuming two hands. There are 'dull' scenes, but the style is uniform throughout. It is a highly mannered rhetorical style, extravagant in utterance, with many appeals and exclamations. There is much violent and vituperative speech; the word 'blood' runs like a *leit-motif* through the play. Epithets, and sometimes nouns, are piled up, in pairs, with or without a conjunction; in triplets or even greater numbers. Types of line-structure tend to recur. One is based on such a triplet; another is the 'balanced' line, of noun and epithet against noun and epithet. A 'clinching' line at the end of a speech is also common. There are 'cumulative' passages of parallel lines with parisonic beginnings or ending. Words and phrases are repeated for emphasis. There is much 'ringing of the changes' on individual words, between line and line and speech and speech. Sometimes this is progressive, as new words are introduced. Sometimes it takes the form of a bitter pun. There is rhetorical structure, in antithesis, antiphon, stichomythia. Some of it is ultimately of Senecan origin. All these features occur individually in pre-Shakespearean plays and recur in later Shakespearean plays, with diminishing frequency. But I do not think that they are quite so massed and multiplied elsewhere. I find nothing here which might not be Shakespeare, at an early stage of development, and while he is still much under the influence of his predecessors. Perhaps I should make a qualification. I am not certain that the extremely ineffective speeches of the ghosts may not be a spectacular theatrical addition.

William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

WRITTEN: 1592.

PERFORMED: *Henslowe's Diary:*
1592 April 11, 'ne. Tittus & Vespacia'. By Strange's Men.
1594 Jan 4, 'ne Titus & Ondronicous'. By Sussex's Men.
1594 June 14, 'Andronicous'. By Admiral's and Chamberlain's Men.

S.R.: 1594 Feb. 6 by John Danter.
1602 transferred from Thomas Millington to Thomas Pavier.

PUBLISHED: 1594 Q1. 'As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembrooke, and Earle of Sussex their Seruants.'
1600 Q2. 'As it hath sundry times been playde by . . . the Lorde Chamberlaine theyr Seruants.'

1611 Q3. 'As it hath sundry times beene plaide by the Kings Maiesties Seruants.'
1623 F1.
Each Quarto is printed from its predecessor, and F1 from Q3 with the addition of III. 2.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCE: Unknown, but the themes of the murderous Moor, and of the marriage of Moor and white woman were common. (Cf. *Othello*.)

If the play were really new in 1594 it is crude work for Shakespeare at so late a date. If, however, the *Tittus and Vespacia* of 1592 refers to *Titus Andronicus* it is more reasonable to attribute it largely to Shakespeare, at least as reviser. J. M. Robertson thinks Peele and Marlowe primarily responsible, with Kyd and Greene as possible collaborators.

In 1678 Edward Ravenscroft wrote an adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, even more full of horrors than the original. His *Address* to his play contains the only piece of external evidence (which need not be taken too seriously) against the authenticity of any play in the First Folio.

BEN JONSON. He that will swear *Jeronimo* or *Andronicus* are the best plays yet shall pass unexcepted at here, as a man whose judgment shows it is constant and hath stood still these five and twenty or thirty years.
Induction to Bartholomew Fair, 1614.

RAVENSCROFT. I think it a greater theft to rob the dead of their praise than the living of their money. That I may not appear guilty of such a crime, 'tis necessary I should acquaint you, that there is a play in Mr. Shakespeare's volume under the name of *Titus Andronicus*, from whence I drew part of this. I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it was not originally his, but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters; this I am apt to believe, because 'tis the most incorrect and indigested piece in all his works; it seems rather a heap of rubbish than a structure.
Address to *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia*, 1678.

JOHNSON. All the editors and critics agree with Mr. Theobald in supposing this play spurious. I see no reason for differing from them; for the colour of the style is wholly different from that of the other plays, and there is an attempt at regular versification and artificial closes, not always inelegant, yet seldom pleasing. The barbarity of the spectacles, and the general massacre, which are here exhibited, can scarcely be conceived tolerable to any audience;

yet we are told by Jonson, that they were not only borne, but praised. That Shakespeare wrote any part, though Theobald declares it incontestable, I see no reason for believing.

SCHLEGEL. This tragedy, it is true, is framed according to a false idea of the tragic, which by an accumulation of cruelties and enormities degenerates into the horrible, and yet leaves no deep impression behind. . . . In detail there is no want of beautiful lines, bold images, nay, even features which betray the peculiar conception of Shakespeare. Among these we may reckon the joy of the treacherous Moor at the blackness and ugliness of his child begot in adultery; and in the compassion of Titus Andronicus, grown childish through grief, for a fly which had been struck dead, and his rage afterwards when he imagines he discovers in it his black enemy, we recognise the future poet of *Lear*.

Lectures on Dramatic Poetry.

HAZLITT. *Titus Andronicus* is certainly as unlike Shakespear's usual style as it is possible. It is an accumulation of vulgar physical horrors, in which the power exercised by the poet bears no proportion to the repugnance excited by the subject. The character of Aaron the Moor is the only thing which shews any originality of conception; and the scene in which he expresses his joy 'at the blackness and ugliness of his child begot in adultery', the only one worthy of Shakespear. Even this is worthy of him only in the display of power, for it gives no pleasure. Shakespear managed these things differently. Nor do we think it a sufficient answer to say that this was an embryo or crude production of the author. In its kind it is full grown, and its features decided and overcharged. It is not like a first imperfect essay, but shows a confirmed habit, a systematic preference of violent effect to everything else. There are occasional detached images of great beauty and delicacy, but these were not beyond the powers of other writers then living.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH. There is an attractive simplicity about the criticism which attributes all that is good to Shakespeare, and all that is bad 'to an inferior hand'. On this principle *Titus Andronicus* has been stoutly alleged to contain no single line of Shakespeare's composing. But if once we are foolishly persuaded to go behind the authority of Heminge and Condell (reinforced, in the case of *Titus*, by the testimony of Francis Meres), we have lost our only safe anchorage, and are afloat upon a wild and violent sea, subject to every wind of doctrine. No critical ear, however highly respected, can safely set itself up against the evidence of Shakespeare's friends. It is wiser to believe that the plays in the Folio were attributed to Shakespeare either because they were wholly his, or because they were recast and rewritten by him, or, lastly, because they contain enough of his work to warrant the attribution.

Shakespeare.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

WRITTEN: 1593.

PERFORMED: 1594 Dec 28, at Gray's Inn.
1604 At Court. 'By his Maiesties plaiers. On Inosents night The plaie of Errors. Shaxberd.' (*Revels Account.*)

S.R.: 1623. One of the 16 plays that had not already been published as Quartos registered by Blount and Jaggard before the publication of the Folio.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A fair text, probably based on Shakespeare's MS.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCE: The *Menæchmi*, a comedy by Plautus.

'The play (1,777 lines) is Shakespeare's shortest, and was probably meant to precede a mask, jig, or other afterpiece.'

GRAY'S INN RECORDS. The next grand Night was intended to be upon *Innocents-Day* at Night.... The Ambassador (of the Inner Temple) came ... about Nine of the Clock at Night ... there arose such a disordered Tumult and Crowd upon the Stage, that there was no Opportunity to effect that which was intended.... The Lord Ambassador and his Train thought that they were not so kindly entertained as was before expected, and thereupon would not stay any longer at that time, but, in a sort, discontented and displeased. After their Departure the Throngs and Tumults did somewhat cease, although so much of them continued, as was able to disorder and confound any good Inventions whatsoever. In regard whereof, as also for that the Sports intended were especially for the gracing of the *Templerians*, it was thought good not to offer any thing of Account, saving Dancing and Revelling with Gentlewomen; and after such Sports, a Comedy of Errors (like to *Plautus* his *Menechmus*) was played by the Players. So that Night was begun, and continued to the end, in nothing but Confusion and Errors; whereupon, it was ever afterwards called, *The Night of Errors*.... We preferred Judgments ... against a Sorcerer or Conjuror that was supposed to be the Cause of that confused Inconvenience. ... And Lastly, that he had foisted a Company of base and common Fellows, to make up our Disorders with a Play of Errors and Confusions; and that that Night had gained to us Discredit, and itself a Nickname of Errors.

Gesta Grayorum, Dec. 28th, 1594.

HAZLITT. This comedy is taken very much from the Menæchmi of Plautus, and is not an improvement on it. Shakespear appears to have bestowed no great pains on it, and there are but a few passages which bear

the decided stamp of his genius. He seems to have relied on his author, and on the interest arising out of the intricacy of the plot. The curiosity excited is certainly very considerable, though not of the most pleasing kind. We are teazed as with a riddle, which notwithstanding we try to solve. . . . This play leads us not to feel much regret that Shakespear was not what is called a classical scholar. We do not think his *forte* would ever have lain in imitating or improving on what others invented, so much as in inventing for himself, and perfecting what he invented,—not perhaps by the omission of faults, but by the addition of the highest excellencies. His own genius was strong enough to bear him up, and he soared longest and best on unborrowed plumes. . . .

Pinch the conjuror is also an excrescence not to be found in Plautus. He is indeed a very formidable anachronism.

> They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-fac'd villain,
> A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
> A thread-bare juggler and a fortune-teller;
> A needy, holy-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch,
> A living dead man.

This is exactly like some of the Puritanical portraits to be met with in Hogarth.

COLERIDGE. The myriad-minded man, our, and all men's, Shakespeare, has in this piece presented us with a legitimate farce in exactest consonance with the philosophical principles and character of farce, as distinguished from comedy and from entertainments. A proper farce is mainly distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses; because, although there have been instances of almost indistinguishable likeness in two persons, yet these are mere individual accidents, *casus ludentis naturæ*, and the *verum* will not excuse the *inverisimile*. But farce dares add the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitition. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted.

JOHN MASEFIELD. The *Menæchmi* of Plautus is a piece of very skilful theatrical craft. It is almost heartless. In bringing it out of the Satanic kingdom of comedy into the charities of a larger system Shakespeare shows for the first time a real largeness of dramatic instinct. In his handling of the tricky ingenious plot he achieves (what, perhaps, he wrote the play to get) a dexterous, certain play of mind. He strikes the ringing note time after time. It cannot be said that the verse, or the sense of character, or the invention is better than in the other early plays. It is not. The play is on a lower plane than any of his other works. It is the only Shakespearean play without a deep philosophical idea. . . . It is also the first play that shows a fine, sustained power of dramatic construction.

William Shakespeare.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

WRITTEN: 1593.

PERFORMED: No record of performance.

S.R.: 1623 Nov. 8 by Blount and Isaak Jaggard. One of the 16 plays registered before the publication of the Folio.

PUBLISHED: 1623: F1. The text is rather short, but fairly correct.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCE: *La Diana Enamorada:* a prose romance in Spanish by Jorge de Montemayor.

JOHNSON. In this play there is a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of care and negligence. The versification is often excellent, the allusions are learned and just; but the author conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the emperor at Milan, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes Proteus, after an interview with Silvia, say he has only seen her picture; and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable. The reason of all this confusion seems to be, that he took his story from a novel, which he sometimes followed, and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered, and sometimes forgot.

HAZLITT. This is little more than the first outlines of a comedy loosely sketched in. It is the story of a novel dramatised with very little labour or pretension; yet there are passages of high poetical spirit, and of inimitable quaintness of humour, which are undoubtedly Shakespear's, and there is throughout the conduct of the fable a careless grace and felicity which marks it for his. . . . The style of the familiar parts of this comedy is indeed made up of conceits—low they may be for what we know, but then they are not poor, but rich ones. The scene of Launce with his dog (not that in the second, but that in the fourth act) is a perfect treat in the way of farcical drollery and invention; nor do we think Speed's manner of proving his master to be in love deficient in wit or sense, though the style may be criticised as not simple enough for the modern taste. . . .

The tender scenes in this play, though not so highly wrought as in some others, have often much sweetness of sentiment and expression. . . .

Lucetta. I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.
Julia. The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns.
The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.
Then let me go, and hinder not my course:
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
And make a pastime of each weary step,
Till the last step have brought me to my love
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

If Shakespear indeed had written only this and other passages in The Two Gentlemen of Verona, he would *almost* have deserved Milton's praise of him—

> And sweetest Shakespear, Fancy's child,
> Warbles his native wood-notes wild.

But as it is, he deserves rather more praise than this.

Logan Pearsall Smith. And yet it is curious to note that the supremest gift of language, that gift of the magic and evocatory phrase, which has made Shakespeare the master-magician of the world, was by no means, with him, as with many young poets, a natural endowment; and we find few traces of it in the long poems he so carefully composed when nearly thirty. His earliest plays are written in the common poetic diction of his time—that style of the day which, as Swinburne says, all great poets begin by writing, and lesser poets write all their lives. In the earlier historical plays, where Shakespeare's authorship is disputed, it is hardly possible to discriminate by any criterion of style which parts are of his composition. In the powerful rhetoric and plangent declamation of certain passages in these plays we seem to be first aware of Shakespeare's gift of language; but it is only in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with the Song 'Who is Silvia', with the line:

The uncertain glory of an April day,

and the passage about the brook that makes sweet music as it strays, that his power over words becomes a magic power, and his golden mastery of speech begins to almost blind us with its beauty.

On Reading Shakespeare.

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

WRITTEN: 1594.

PUBLISHED: 1598 Q1. 'A Pleasant Conceited Comedie Called, Loues labors lost. As it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas. Newly corrected and augmented By W. Shakespere.'
Not a 'bad' Quarto, but a badly printed text. The fact that there was no entry in the Stationers' Register before Q1 suggests that there may have been an earlier, surreptitious Quarto from which Q1 was 'newly corrected and augmented', though it is possible that Shakespeare rewrote the play for its publication in 1598. It is the first play to be published with his name.
1623 F1. Set up from Q1. There are many corrections, but many new errors are introduced.
1631 Q2. 'A Wittie and Pleasant Comedie, As it was Acted by his Maiesties Seruants at the Blacke-Friers and the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare.'

PERFORMED: If the title-page of Q1 is not the repetition of an earlier one 'it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas', i.e. 1597-8, though of course it may have been acted as soon as written.
1605. 'By his Maiesties plaiers. Betwin Newèrs Day and Twelfe day A play of Loues Labours Lost.' (*Revels Account.*)

S.R.: 1607 Jan. 22, by Nicholas Ling.
1607 Nov. 19, transferred to John Smethwick.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: The plot appears to be Shakespeare's own, though there are many topical allusions: the Duc de Biron and the Duc de Longueville were supporters of Henry of Navarre.

J. D. Wilson thinks that the play as we have it is a revision of an early version that was acted at the Earl of Southampton's house in plague-time. It certainly seems to be written for a courtly rather than a popular audience.

SIR WALTER COPE. I have sent and bene all thys morning huntyng for players Juglers & Such kinde of Creaturs, but fynde them harde to finde, wherfore Leavinge notes for them to seeke me, Burbage ys come, & sayes ther ys no new playe that the quene hath not seene, but they have revyved an olde one, Cawled *Loves Labore lost*, which for wytt & mirthe



A

PLEASANT

Conceited Comedie

CALLED,

Loues labors loſt.

As it vvas preſented before her Highnes this laſt Chriſtmas.

Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.



Imprinted at London by *W.W.*
for *Cutbert Burby.*
1598.

TITLE-PAGE OF FIRST QUARTO.

he sayes will please her exceedingly. And Thys ys apointed to be playd to Morowe night at my Lord of Sowthamptons, unless yow send a wrytt to Remove the Corpus Cum Causa to your howse in Strande. Burbage ys my messenger Ready attendyng your pleasure.

Letter to Robert Cecil, 1604.

JOHNSON. In this play, which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish and vulgar; and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen. But there are scattered through the whole many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare.

COLERIDGE. The characters in this play are either impersonated out of Shakspeare's own multiformity by imaginative self-position or out of such as a country town and schoolboy's observation might supply,—the curate, the schoolmaster, the Armado, (who even in my time was not extinct in the cheaper inns of North Wales) and so on. The satire is chiefly on follies of words. Biron and Rosaline are evidently the pre-existent state of Benedict and Beatrice, and so, perhaps, is Boyet of Lafeu, and Costard of the Tapster in Measure for Measure; and the frequency of the rhymes, the sweetness as well as the smoothness of the metre, and the number of acute and fancifully illustrated aphorisms, are all as they ought to be in a poet's youth. True genius begins by generalizing and condensing; it ends in realizing and expanding. It first collects the seeds.

Yet if this juvenile drama had been the only one extant of our Shakspeare, and we possessed the tradition only of his riper works, or accounts of them in writers who had not even mentioned this play,—how many of Shakspeare's characteristic features might we not still have discovered in Love's Labour's Lost, though as in a portrait taken of him in his boyhood?

I can never sufficiently admire the wonderful activity of thought throughout the whole of the first scene of the play, rendered natural, as it is, by the choice of the characters, and the whimsical determination on which the drama is founded. . . .

The same kind of intellectual action is exhibited in a more serious and elevated strain in many other parts of this play. Biron's speech at the end of the fourth act is an excellent specimen of it. It is logic clothed in rhetoric;—but observe how Shakspeare, in his two-fold being of poet and philosopher, avails himself of it to convey profound truths in the most lively images,—the whole remaining faithful to the character supposed to utter the lines, and the expressions themselves constituting a further developement of that character:—

> Other slow arts entirely keep the brain:
> And therefore finding barren practisers,
> Scarce shew a harvest of their heavy toil:
> But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
> Lives not alone immured in the brain;

> But, with the motion of all elements,
> Courses as swift as thought in every power;
> And gives to every power a double power,
> Above their functions and their offices. . . .[1]

This is quite a study;—sometimes you see this youthful god of poetry connecting disparate thoughts purely by means of resemblances in the words expressing them,—a thing in character in lighter comedy, especially of that kind in which Shakspeare delights, namely, the purposed display of wit, though sometimes, too, disfiguring his graver scenes;—but more often you may see him doubling the natural connection or order of logical consequence in the thoughts by the introduction of an artificial and sought-for resemblance in the words, as, for instance, in the third line of the play,—

> And then grace us in the disgrace of death;—

this being a figure often having its force and propriety, as justified by the law of passion, which, inducing in the mind an unusual activity, seeks for means to waste its superfluity,—when in the highest degree—in lyric repetitions and sublime tautology.

HAZLITT. If we were to part with any of the author's comedies, it should be this. Yet we would be loth to part with Don Adriano de Armado, that mighty potentate of nonsense, or his page, that handful of wit; with Nathaniel the curate, or Holofernes the schoolmaster, and their dispute after dinner on 'the golden cadences of poesy'; with Costard the clown, or Dull the constable. Biron is too accomplished a character to be lost to the world, and yet he could not appear without his fellow courtiers and the king: and if we were to leave out the ladies, the gentlemen would have no mistresses. So that we believe we may let the whole play stand as it is, and we shall hardly venture to 'set a mark of reprobation on it'. Still we have some objections to the style, which we think savours more of the pedantic spirit of Shakespear's time than of his own genius; more of controversial divinity, and the logic of Peter Lombard, than of the inspiration of the Muse. It transports us quite as much to the manners of the court, and the quirks of courts of law, as to the scenes of nature or the fairy-land of his own imagination. Shakespear has set himself to imitate the tone of polite conversation then prevailing among the fair, the witty, and the learned, and he has imitated it but too faithfully. It is as if the hand of Titian had been employed to give grace to the curls of a full-bottomed periwig, or Raphael had attempted to give expression to the tapestry figures in the House of Lords.

WALTER PATER. It is this foppery of delicate language, this fashionable plaything of his time, with which Shakespeare is occupied in *Love's Labour's Lost*. He shows us the manner in all its stages; passing from the grotesque and vulgar pedantry of Holofernes, through the extravagant

[1] The rest of this speech is quoted on p. 146.

but polished caricature of Armado, to become the peculiar characteristic of a real though still quaint poetry in Biron himself, who is still chargeable even at his best with just a little affectation. As Shakespeare laughs broadly at it in Holofernes or Armado, so he is the analyst of its curious charm in Biron; and this analysis involves a delicate raillery by Shakespeare himself at his own chosen manner. . . .

As happens with every true dramatist, Shakespeare is for the most part hidden behind the persons of his creation. Yet there are certain of his characters in which we feel that there is something of self-portraiture. And it is not so much in his grander, more subtle and ingenious creations that we feel this—in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*—as in those slighter and more spontaneously developed figures, who, while far from playing principal parts, are yet distinguished by a peculiar happiness and delicate ease in the drawing of them; figures which possess, above all, that winning attractiveness which there is no man but would willingly exercise, and which resemble those works of art which, though not meant to be very great or imposing, are yet wrought of the choicest material. Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, belongs to this group of Shakespeare's characters—versatile, mercurial people, such as make good actors, and in whom the

'Nimble spirits of the arteries',

the finer but still merely animal elements of great wit, predominate. A careful delineation of minor, yet expressive traits seems to mark them out as the characters of his predilection; and it is hard not to identify him with these more than with others. Biron, in Love's Labour's Lost, is perhaps the most striking member of this group. In this character, which is never quite in touch, never quite on a perfect level of understanding, with the other persons of the play, we see, perhaps, a reflex of Shakespeare himself, when he has just become able to stand aside from and estimate the first period of his poetry.

Appreciations.

H. GRANVILLE-BARKER. Here is a fashionable play; now, by three hundred years, out of fashion. Nor did it ever, one supposes, make a very wide appeal. It abounds in jokes for the elect. Were you not numbered among them you laughed, for safety, in the likeliest places. A year or two later the elect themselves might be hard put to it to remember what the joke was. . . .

Drama, as Shakespeare will come to write it, is, first and last, the projection of character in action; and devices for doing this, simple and complex, must make up three-quarters of its artistry. We can watch his early discovery that dialogue is waste matter unless it works to this end; that wit, epigram, sentiment are like paper and sticks in a fireplace, the flaring and crackling counting for nothing if the fire itself won't light, if these creatures in whose mouths the wit is sounded won't 'come alive'. To the last he kept his youthful delight in a pun; and he would write an occasional passage of word-music with a

minimum of meaning to it (but of maximum emotional value, it will be found, to the character that has to speak it). His development of verse to dramatic use is a study in itself. He never ceased to develop it, but for a while the dramatist had a hard time with the lyric poet. The early plays abound, besides, in elaborate embroidery of language done for its own sake. This was a fashionable literary exercise and Shakespeare was an adept at it. To many young poets of the time their language was a new-found wonder; its very handling gave them pleasure. The amazing things it could be made to do! He had to discover that they were not much to his purpose; but it is not easy to stop doing what you do so well. Yet even in this play we may note the difference between the Berowne of

> Light seeking light doth light of light beguile;
> So ere you find where light in darkness lies
> Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes!

and of the soliloquy beginning

> And I forsooth in love . . .

Turn also from one of the many sets of wit to Katharine's haunting answer when Rosaline twits her with rebellion against Cupid:

Rosaline. You'll ne'er be friends with him; he kill'd your sister.
Katharine. He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy:
And so she died: had she been light, like you,
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,
She might have been a grandam ere she died
And so may you, for a light heart lives long.

Compare it with the set of wit that follows:

Rosaline. What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?
Katharine. A light condition in a beauty dark.
Rosaline. We need more light to find your meaning out.
Katharine. You'll mar the light, by taking it in snuff;
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.

But Rosaline won't let her, and they manage to get five more rather spicier exchanges. It is all very charming, and a 'set of wit' describes it well. Get a knowledge of the game and it may be as attractive to watch for a little as are a few sets of tennis. But pages on pages of such smart repartee will not tell us as much of the speakers as those few simple lines of Katharine's tell us —of herself and her love for her sister, and of Rosaline too.

Prefaces to Shakespeare: First Series.

SIR EDWIN DURNING-LAWRENCE, BT. The 'revealed' and 'all revealing' sentence forms a correct Latin hexameter, and we will proceed to prove that it is without possibility of doubt or question the real solution which the 'Author' intended to be known at some

future time, when he placed the long word Honorificabilitudinitatibus, which is composed of twenty-seven letters, on the twenty-seventh line of page 136, where it appears as the 151st word printed in ordinary type (in Love's Labour's Lost in the First Folio).

The all-important statement which reveals the authorship of the plays in the most clear and direct manner (every one of the twenty-seven letters composing the long word being employed and no others) is in the form of a correct Latin hexameter, which reads as follows—

HI LUDI F. BACONIS NATI TUITI ORBI
These plays F. Bacon's offspring are preserved for the world.
Bacon is Shakespeare.

ROMEO AND JULIET

WRITTEN: 1595.

PERFORMED: 'Often plaid publiquely' before Q1 1597.

PUBLISHED: 1597 Q1. 'An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet. As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his Seruants.' A 'bad' Quarto, apparently reproduced from memory by two or three actors who had played in a shortened version.
1599 Q2. 'Newly corrected, augmented, and amended: As it hath bene sundry times publiquely acted, by the right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants.' Q2 contains many errors, but may have been set up from the original MS with some reference to a corrected Q1. Q2 has 'Enter Will Kemp' for Q1's 'Enter Peter' (iv. 5. 102).
1609 Q3. 'As it hath beene sundrie times publiquely Acted, by the Kings Maiesties Seruants at the Globe.' Set up from Q2.
Q4. 'Written by W. Shake-speare.' No date. Set up from Q3.
1623 F1. Set up from Q3.

S.R.: 1607 Jan 22, by Nicholas Ling.
1607 Nov 19, transferred to John Smethwick.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: Arthur Brooke's poem, *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), and William Painter's prose version in his *Palace of Pleasure* (1567). Both these come from a novella by Bandello.

The disintegrators attribute much of the play to other men. J. M. Robertson considers it 'a composite play, drafted before Shakespeare by several hands, merely revised and expanded by him in the version preserved in Q_1, and further modified by his and other hands in the version preserved in Q_2'.

In 1680 Otway adapted *Romeo and Juliet* in his *Caius Marius*. The scene is Rome, and Juliet (Lavinia) wakes before Romeo (Marius) dies. Garrick returned to the original, though he retained the scene between the dying lovers, this version being played until Kemble's time.

LEONARD DIGGES.

> Nor shall I e're beleeue, or thinke thee dead
> (Though mist) untill our bankrout Stage be sped
> (Impossible) with some new strain t' out-do
> Passions of *Iuliet*, and her *Romeo*.
>
> *First Folio*, 1623.

PEPYS. To the Opera, and there saw 'Romeo and Juliet', the first time it was ever acted, but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do, and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less. [Betterton played Romeo, and his wife Juliet.]

1 *March* 1662.

DRYDEN. *Shakespear* show'd the best of his skill in his *Mercutio*, and he said himself, that he was forc'd to kill him in the third Act, to prevent being kill'd by him. But, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person: I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless, that he might have liv'd to the end of the Play, and dy'd in his bed, without offence to any man.

On the Dramatique Poetry of the Last Age, 1684.

JOHNSON. This play is one of the most pleasing of our author's performances. The scenes are busy and various, the incidents numerous and important, the catastrophe irresistibly affecting, and the process of the action carried on with such probability, at least with such congruity to popular opinions, as tragedy requires.

Here is one of the few attempts of Shakespeare to exhibit the conversation of gentlemen, to represent the airy sprightliness of juvenile elegance. Mr. Dryden mentions a tradition, which might easily reach his time, of a declaration made by Shakespeare, that 'he was obliged to kill Mercutio in the third act, lest he should have been killed by him'. Yet he thinks him 'no such formidable person, but that he might have lived through the play, and died in his bed', without danger to the poet. Dryden well knew, had he been in quest of truth, that, in a pointed sentence, more regard is commonly had to the words than the thought, and that it is very seldom to be rigorously understood. Mercutio's wit, gaiety and courage, will always procure him friends

that wish him a longer life; but his death is not precipitated, he has lived out the time allotted him in the construction of the play; nor do I doubt the ability of Shakespeare to have continued his existence, though some of his sallies are, perhaps, out of reach of Dryden; whose genius was not very fertile of merriment, nor ductile to humour, but acute, argumentative, comprehensive and sublime.

The nurse is one of the characters in which the author delighted; he has, with great subtility of distinction, drawn her at once loquacious and secret, obsequious and insolent, trusty and dishonest.

His comic scenes are happily wrought, but his pathetic strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations. His persons, however distressed, have a conceit left them in their misery, a miserable conceit.

HAZLITT. *Romeo and Juliet* is the only tragedy which Shakespear has written entirely on a love-story. It is supposed to have been his first play, and it deserves to stand in that proud rank. There is the buoyant spirit of youth in every line, in the rapturous intoxication of hope, and in the bitterness of despair. It has been said of *Romeo and Juliet* by a great critic,[1] that 'whatever is most intoxicating in the odour of a southern spring, languishing in the song of the nightingale, or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, is to be found in this poem'. The description is true; and yet it does not answer to our idea of the play. For if it has the sweetness of the rose, it has its freshness too; if it has the languor of the nightingale's song, it has also its giddy transport; if it has the softness of a southern spring, it is as glowing and as bright. There is nothing of a sickly and sentimental cast. Romeo and Juliet are in love, but they are not love-sick. Everything speaks the very soul of pleasure, the high and healthy pulse of the passions: the heart beats, the blood circulates and mantles throughout. . . .

Romeo is Hamlet in love. There is the same rich exuberance of passion and sentiment in the one, that there is of thought and sentiment in the other. Both are absent and self-involved, both live out of themselves in a world of imagination. Hamlet is abstracted from everything; Romeo is abstracted from everything but his love, and lost in it. His 'frail thoughts dally with faint surmise', and are fashioned out of the suggestions of hope, 'the flatteries of sleep'. He is himself only in his Juliet; she is his only reality, his heart's true home and idol. The rest of the world is to him a passing dream.

COLERIDGE. I have previously had occasion to speak at large on the subject of the three unities of time, place, and action, as applied to the drama in the abstract, and to the particular stage for which Shakespeare wrote, as far as he can be said to have written for any stage but that of the universal mind. I hope I have in some measure succeeded in demonstrating that the former two, instead of being rules, were mere inconveniences attached to the local peculiarities of the Athenian drama; that the last alone deserved the name of a principle, and that in the preservation of this unity Shakspeare

[1] Coleridge.

stood pre-eminent. Yet, instead of unity of action, I should greatly prefer the more appropriate, though scholastic and uncouth, words homogeneity, proportionateness, and totality of interest,—expressions, which involve the distinction, or rather the essential difference, betwixt the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive, life-power of inspired genius. In the former each part is separately conceived, and then by a succeeding act put together;—not as watches are made for wholesale—(for there each part supposes a preconception of the whole in some mind)—but more like pictures on a motley screen. Whence arises the harmony that strikes us in the wildest natural landscapes,—in the relative shapes of rocks, the harmony of colours in the heaths, ferns, and lichens, the leaves of the beech, and the oak, the stems and rich brown branches of the birch and other mountain trees, varying from verging autumn to returning spring,—compared with the visual effect from the greater number of artificial plantations?—From this, that the natural landscape is effected, as it were, by a single energy modified *ab intra* in each component part. And as this is the particular excellence of the Shakespearian drama generally, so it is especially characteristic of the Romeo and Juliet. . . .

Mercutio is a man possessing all the elements of a poet: the whole world was, as it were, subject to his law of association. Whenever he wishes to impress anything, all things become his servants for the purpose: all things tell the same tale, and sound in unison. This faculty, moreover is combined with the manners and feelings of a perfect gentleman, himself utterly unconscious of his powers. By his loss it was contrived that the whole catastrophe of the tragedy should be brought about: it endears him to Romeo, and gives to the death of Mercutio an importance which it could not otherwise have acquired.

I say this in answer to an observation, I think by Dryden (to which indeed Dr. Johnson has fully replied), that Shakspeare having carried the part of Mercutio as far as he could, till his genius was exhausted, had killed him in the third Act, to get him out of the way. What shallow nonsense! As I have remarked, upon the death of Mercutio the whole catastrophe depends; it is produced by it. The scene in which it occurs serves to show how indifference to any subject but one, and aversion to activity on the part of Romeo, may be overcome and roused to the most resolute and determined conduct. Had not Mercutio been rendered so amiable and so interesting, we could not have felt so strongly the necessity for Romeo's interference, connecting it immediately, and passionately, with the future fortunes of the lover and his mistress. . . .

Shakspeare has described this passion in various states and stages, beginning, as was most natural, with love in the young. Does he open his play by making Romeo and Juliet in love at first sight—at the first glimpse, as any ordinary thinker would do? Certainly not: he knew what he was about, and how he was to accomplish what he was about: he was to develope the whole passion, and he commences with the first elements—that sense of imperfection, that yearning to combine itself with something lovely. Romeo became enamoured of the idea he had formed in his own mind, and then, as it were,

christened the first real being of the contrary sex as endowed with the perfections he desired. He appears to be in love with Rosaline; but, in truth, he is in love only with his own idea. He felt that necessity of being beloved which no noble mind can be without. Then our poet, our poet who so well knew human nature, introduces Romeo to Juliet, and makes it not only a violent, but a permanent love—a point for which Shakespeare has been ridiculed by the ignorant and unthinking. Romeo is first represented in a state most susceptible of love, and then, seeing Juliet, he took and retained the infection.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH. Since the rise of Romantic criticism, the appreciation of Shakespeare has become a kind of auction, where the highest bidder, however extravagant, carries off the prize. To love and to be wise is not given to man; the poets themselves have run to wild extremes in their anxiety to find all Shakespeare in every part of him; so that it has become to be almost a mark of insensibility to consider his work rationally and historically as a whole. Infinite subtlety of purpose has been attributed to him in cases where he accepted a story as he found it, or half contemptuously threw in a few characters and speeches to suit the requirements of his Elizabethan audience. Coleridge, for example, finds it 'a strong instance of the fineness of Shakespeare's insight into the nature of the passions, that Romeo is introduced already love-bewildered', doting on Rosaline. Yet the whole story of Romeo's passion for Rosaline is set forth in Arthur Brooke's poem, from which Shakespeare certainly drew the matter of his play. Again, the same great critic asserts that 'the low soliloquy of the Porter' in *Macbeth* was 'written for the mob by some other hand, perhaps with Shakespeare's consent', and that 'finding it take, he with the remaining ink of a pen otherwise employed, just interpolated the words—"I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire". Of the rest not one syllable has the ever-present being of Shakespeare.' That is to say, Coleridge does not like the Porter's speech, so he denies it to Shakespeare. But one sentence in it is too good to lose, so Shakespeare must be at hand to write it. This is the very ecstasy of criticism, and sends us back to the cool and manly utterances of Dryden, Johnson, and Pope with a heightened sense of the value of moderation and candour.

Shakespeare.

RICHARD II

WRITTEN: 1595.

PERFORMED: 1595. Sir Ed. Hoby invited Sir Robert Cecil to see a performance of 'K. Richard' on Dec. 9th.
1601. 7 Feb. At the Globe.
1631. Revived at The Globe.

S.R.: 1597. Aug 29, by Andrew Wise. Transferred to Matthew Law in 1603.

PUBLISHED: 1597 Q1. 'As it hath beene publikely acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Seruants.'
A 'good' Quarto, probably printed from Shakespeare's MS.
1598 Q2. 'By William Shake-speare.' Printed from Q1.
1598 Q3. Printed from Q2.
1608 Q4. 'With new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard, As it hath been lately acted by the Kinges Majesties seruants, at the Globe.' Printed from Q3. The 'deposition scene' appears to have been part of the original play which was cut when Q1 was printed. The version in Q4 seems to be a shorthand report.
1615 Q5. Printed from Q4.
1623 F1. Printed from Q5.
1634 Q6.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland.*

The Elizabethans saw parallels between the reigns of Richard II and Elizabeth. The Earl of Essex was charged with High Treason 'for the disposing and settling to himself Aswell the Crowne of England, as of the kingdome of Ireland'. On the day before his rebellion, 8 Feb. 1601, his supporters persuaded Augustine Phillips to revive *Richard II* at the Globe.

Nahum Tate, Theobald, and Kean all made adaptations of *Richard II*.

J. M. Robertson considers *Richard II* an adaptation by Shakespeare of a play by Marlowe.

SIR EDWARD COKE. I protest upon my soul and conscience I doe beleeve she should not have long lived after she had been in your power. Note but the precedents of former ages, how long lived Richard the Second after he was surprised in the same manner?

Speech at the Trial of the Earl of Essex, 1601.

FRANCIS BACON. The afternoone before the rebellion, Merricke, with a great company of others, that afterwards were all in the action, had procured to bee played before them, the play of deposing King Richard the second. Neither was it casuall, but a play bespoken by Merrick. And not so onely, but when it was told him by one of the players, that the playe was olde, and they should haue losse in playing it, because fewe would come to it: there was fourty shillings extraordinarie giuen to play it, and so thereupon playd it was. So earnest hee was to satisfie his eyes with the sight of

that tragedie which hee thought soone after his lord should bring from the stage to the state, but that God turned it vpon their owne heads.

A Declaration of the Treasons by Robert late Earle of Essex, 1601.

DRYDEN. I cannot leave this subject, before I do justice to that divine poet, by giving you one of his passionate descriptions: 'tis of Richard the Second when he was deposed, and led in triumph through the streets of London by Henry of Bullingbrook: the painting of it is so lively, and the words so moving, that I have scarce read anything comparable to it in any other language. Suppose you have seen already the fortunate usurper passing through the crowd, and followed by the shouts and acclamations of the people; and now behold King Richard entering upon the scene: consider the wretchedness of his condition, and his carriage in it; and refrain from pity, if you can—

> As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
> After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
> Are idly bent on him that enters next,
> Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
> Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
> Did scowl on Richard: no man cried, God save him:
> No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,
> But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
> Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
> His face still combating with tears and smiles
> (The badges of his grief and patience),
> That had not God (for some strong purpose) steel'd
> The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
> And barbarism itself have pitied him.

Preface to Troilus and Cressida, 1679.

JOHNSON. Jonson, who, in his Catiline and Sejanus, has inserted many speeches from the Roman historians, was, perhaps, induced to that practice by the example of Shakespeare, who had condescended sometimes to copy more ignoble writers. But Shakespeare had more of his own than Jonson, and, if he sometimes was willing to spare his labour, showed by what he performed at other times, that his extracts were made by choice or idleness rather than necessity.

This play is one of those which Shakespeare revised; but as success in works of invention is not always proportionate to labour, it is not finished at last with the happy force of some other of his tragedies, nor can be said much to affect the passions or enlarge the understanding.

COLERIDGE. I have stated that the transitional link between the epic poem and the drama is the historic drama; that in the epic poem a pre-announced fate gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as its instruments, whilst the drama, on the other hand, places fate and will in opposition to each other, and is then most perfect, when the victory of fate is obtained in consequence of imperfections in the opposing will, so as to

leave a final impression that the fate itself is but a higher and a more intelligent will.

From the length of the speeches, and the circumstance that, with one exception, the events are all historical, and presented in their results, not produced by acts seen by, or taking place before, the audience, this tragedy is ill suited to our present large theatres. But in itself, and for the closet, I feel no hestiation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakespeare's purely historical plays. For the two parts of Henry IV form a species of themselves, which may be named the mixed drama. The distinction does not depend on the mere quantity of historical events in the play compared with the fictions; for there is as much history in Macbeth as in Richard, but in the relation of the history to the plot. In the purely historical plays, the history forms the plot; in the mixed, it directs it; in the rest, as Macbeth, Hamlet, Cymbeline, Lear, it subserves it. But, however unsuited to the stage this drama may be, God forbid that even there it should fall dead on the hearts of jacobinized Englishmen! Then, indeed, we might say—*præteriit gloria mundi!* For the spirit of patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating soul of this noble work. It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakespeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts of Henry IV, by presenting, as it were, our very selves. Shakspeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that, namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together. . . .

Richard is not meant to be a debauchee; but we see in him that sophistry which is common to man, by which we can deceive our own hearts, and at one and the same time apologize for, and yet commit, the error. Shakspeare has represented this character in a very peculiar manner. He has not made him amiable with counterbalancing faults; but has openly and broadly drawn those faults without reserve, relying on Richard's disproportionate sufferings and gradually emergent good qualities for our sympathy; and this was possible, because his faults are not positive vices, but spring entirely from defect of character. . . .

No doubt, something of Shakspeare's punning must be attributed to his age, in which direct and formal combats of wit were a favourite pastime of the courtly and accomplished. It was an age more favourable, upon the whole, to vigour of intellect than the present, in which a dread of being thought pedantic dispirits and flattens the energies of original minds. But independently of this, I have no hesitation in saying that a pun, if it be congruous with the feeling of the scene, is not only allowable in the dramatic dialogue, but oftentimes one of the most effectual intensives of passion.

HAZLITT. *Richard II* is a play little known compared with *Richard III*, which last is a play that every unfledged candidate for theatrical fame chuses to strut and fret his hour upon the stage in; yet we confess that

we prefer the nature and feeling of the one to the noise and bustle of the other; at least, as we are so often forced to see it acted. In *Richard II* the weakness of the king leaves us leisure to take a greater interest in the misfortunes of the man. After the first act, in which the arbitrariness of his behaviour only proves his want of resolution, we see him staggering under the unlooked-for blows of fortune, bewailing his loss of kingly power, not preventing it, sinking under the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, his authority trampled on, his hopes failing him, and his pride crushed and broken down under insults and injuries, which his own misconduct had provoked, but which he has not courage or manliness to resent. The change of tone and behaviour in the two competitors for the throne according to their change of fortune, from the capricious sentence of banishment passed by Richard upon Bolingbroke, the suppliant offers and modest pretensions of the latter on his return, to the high and haughty tone with which he accepts Richard's resignation of the crown after the loss of all his power, the use which he makes of the deposed king to grace his triumphal progress through the streets of London, and the final intimation of his wish for his death, which immediately finds a servile executioner, is marked throughout with complete effect and without the slightest appearance of effort. The steps by which Bolingbroke mounts the throne are those by which Richard sinks into the grave. We feel neither respect nor love for the deposed monarch; for he is as wanting in energy as in principle: but we pity him, for he pities himself. His heart is by no means hardened against himself, but bleeds afresh at every new stroke of mischance, and his sensibility, absorbed in his own person, and unused to misfortune, is not only tenderly alive to its own sufferings, but without the fortitude to bear them. He is, however, human in his distresses; for to feel pain, and sorrow, weakness, disappointment, remorse and anguish, is the lot of humanity, and we sympathise with him accordingly. The sufferings of the man make us forget that he ever was a king.

LAMB. The reluctant pangs of abdicating royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakspeare scarce improved in his Richard the Second; and the death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene ancient or modern with which I am acquainted.

Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY. The whole *ordonnance* and handling of the play, whether we look at plot, character, diction, or versification, speak a period at which the poet has already learned a great deal, but has not learned everything. He has already acquired the full disposition of the chronicle-play after a fashion which nobody but himself had yet shown; but he has not discovered the full secret of diversifying and adorning it. The historic page is translated into a dramatic one with the indefinable mastery—in adjusting to the theatre the 'many actions of many men' at many places and times—which perhaps no other dramatist has ever fully shown. But, to mention nothing else, there is a want of tragi-comic relief: the history, in-

teresting as it is, is still too much of a *mere* history. So, in the second respect, the poet has left his predecessors, and even to some extent himself, far behind in the art of breathing a soul into the figures of the historic tapestry; but he has not yet made it, as he was to make it later, a wholly complete and individual soul. Of the central figure we shall speak anon; but it is almost more important that the accessories, though never mere 'supers', still lack that full Shakespearean individuality 'in the round' of which the poet is so prodigal later. . . . They have, many of them, the rudiments of the great Shakespearean quality of 'setting the principal character going'; but as that character itself is not fully worked out, so their powers are not fully called into action. . . .

The same interesting character of transition is over the diction, in the wider sense, and the verse. The latter is far advanced beyond the chaos of the earliest plays, where rhyme and blank verse, 'fourteeners' and sheer doggerel, lyrical measures and prose, jostle each other as Shakespeare successively and impartially experiments with the imperfect implements of his predecessors. The blank verse itself has made great strides; it is one of the most noticeable points of that contrast with Marlowe, to which we shall come presently, that Shakespeare has improved upon the stately staccato of the 'dead shepherd' almost as much as Marlowe himself had improved in his normal passages on the not even stately stump of 'Gorboduc'. But it is still not perfectly flexible and cursive; it has not completely mastered the secrets of the pause, and the varied trisyllabic and disyllabic foot, and the consequent verse paragraph. There is more rhyme than there need be; there is even the quatrain, which hardly even Dryden, in his first flush of passion for rhyme on the stage, would have ventured to endorse. And on the other hand, there is no (or next to no) prose—that remarkable provider of relief, appetite, and many other good things in the intervals of tragic verse. The longer speeches still possess something, nay much, of that *tirade* character—that rhetorical rather than poetical *ordonnancé*—which disappears so marvellously in the tragedies of the greatest time even where rhetoric was almost excusable.

The diction of the play, from the present point of view, is a subject almost more interesting, but much more delicate and uncertain. Speaking from many years' reading, I should say that 'Richard II' is the most *carefully* written of all Shakespeare's plays. A certain constraint is over almost all of it. . . . There is nothing of the almost riotous variety and license of the earliest dramas. There is marked abstinence, as a rule—of course with exceptions—from that play on words which, as some would have it, was the very breath of Shakespeare's nostrils. The Marlowesque magniloquence appears; but it is almost always studiously toned, adjusted, clarified. In short, in this, as in other matters, the poet is between his two periods of freedom, and in one, as it were, almost of pupilage. He is afraid, perhaps he does not even wish, to 'let himself go'. He breaks away and soars sometimes, but not very often, in the direction of sublimity; he scarcely ever breaks away in the other direction of homeliness. He is, on the lines which he is following, almost 'correct'. And the worst that can be said of the play is that this approach to correctness brings with it the inevitable concomitant of a certain loss of colour.

It is probable that this correctness—not less relatively certain because it is

not according to the Three Unities—has done the piece harm with some critics in the inevitable comparison with Marlowe's 'Edward II'. Shakespeare has despised, as he always did despise, the illegitimate attractions; and there is nothing answering to Edward's fatal passion for Gaveston to excuse—if it can be called excuse—the misdoings of Edward's great-grandson. And Shakespeare was already discarding, though he had not yet quite discarded, the *incomprehensibleness* of Marlowe. That mighty but incomplete and far from universal genius always, as his continuer in the next generation said, 'threw himself headlong into clouds' and abode in them, with the profit as with the disadvantage of his dwelling-place. Lamb may be right in taking the pathos of Edward's ghastly and degrading end as greater than that of the final moment, which becomes Richard better than any passage of his happier life. But the decision is at least open to argument. Lamb, exquisite critic as he was, was always a little liable to the exquisite critics' sin of preferring what the vulgar do not know to what they do, and in his time Marlowe was all but utterly unknown. In almost every other respect 'Richard II' seems to me to have the advantage.

Introduction to Richard II.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

WRITTEN: 1596.

PERFORMED: *A Shrew* was acted 'sundry times' before its publication in 1594. On June 13th, 1594 Henslowe received 9s. for a performance of '*the Tamynge of A Shrowe*'.
The first definite reference to *The Shrew* is: 'On Tusday night at Saint James, the 26 of Novemb. 1633, was acted before the Kinge and Queene, The Taminge of the Shrewe. Likt.'

S.R.: 1594 May 2nd, by Peter Short, 'the Tayminge of a Shrowe'. 1607. Transferred to Nicholas Ling, and then to John Smethwick.
These entries refer to the older anonymous play, *The Taming of* A *Shrew*, which was published in 1594 'As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrook his seruants', and again in 1596 and 1607.
In their composite entry for the Folio in 1623, of Shakespeare's plays that had not previously been published, Blount and Jaggard omit *The Taming of The Shrew* and *King John*, presumably because they passed as reprints of the older plays *The Taming of A Shrew*, and *The Troublesome Reign of King John*.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. Probably set up from MS used as stage-copy, for actors' names occur in the stage-directions.
1631 Q. 'A Wittie and Pleasant Comedie Called The Taming of the Shrew. As it was acted by his Maiesties Seruants at the Blacke Friers and the Globe. Written by Will. Shakespeare.' Set up from F1.

MERES: Not mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598), but it seems probable that by *Loue labours wonne* he meant *The Taming of the Shrew*. (See p. 267.)

SOURCES: *The Taming of A Shrew*, and Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, translated by George Gascoigne as *The Supposes*.

It seems probable that Shakespeare collaborated in this play: that he wrote the Petruchio-Katharine scenes and the Sly episode with its Warwickshire references, while his unknown collaborator wrote the Bianca sub-plot.

Soon after the Restoration John Lacy wrote a coarse prose version called *Sauny the Scot*. It was also adapted by Garrick.

SIR ASTON COKAIN.

Shakspeare your *Wincot*-Ale hath much renownd,
That fox'd a Beggar so (by chance was found
Sleeping) that there needed not many a word
To make him to believe he was a Lord:
But you affirm (and in it seem most eager)
'Twill make a Lord as drunk as any Beggar.
Bid *Norton* brew such Ale as *Shakspeare* fancies
Did put *Kit Sly* into such Lordly trances:
And let us meet there (for a fit of Gladness)
And drink our selves merry in sober sadness.

To Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincott, 1658.

PEPYS. To the King's house, and there saw 'The Tameing of a Shrew', which hath some very good pieces in it, but generally is but a mean play; and the best part, 'Sawny', done by Lacy; and hath not half its life, by reason of the words, I suppose, not being understood, at least by me. (9 *April* 1667.)

To the King's playhouse, and there saw a silly play and an old one, 'The Taming of a Shrew'. (2 *Nov.* 1667.)

JOHNSON. Of this play the two plots are so well united, that they can hardly be called two, without injury to the art with which they are interwoven. The attention is entertained with all the variety of a double plot, yet is not distracted by unconnected incidents.

The part between Catharine and Petruchio is eminently sprightly and diverting. At the marriage of Bianca, the arrival of the real father, perhaps, produces more perplexity than pleasure. The whole play is very popular and diverting.

HAZLITT. *The Taming of the Shrew* is almost the only one of Shakespeare's comedies that has a regular plot, and downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows admirably how self-will is only to be got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculous perversity is only to be driven out by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill humour from beginning to end. . . .

We have heard the *Honey-Moon* called 'an elegant Katherine and Petruchio'. We suspect we do not understand this word *elegant* in the sense that many people do. But in our sense of the word, we should call Lucentio's description of his mistress elegant.

> Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,
> And with her breath she did perfume the air:
> Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

When Biondello tells the same Lucentio for his encouragement, 'I knew a wench married in an afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit, and so may you, sir'—there is nothing elegant in this, and yet we hardly know which of the two passages is the best. . . .

The character of Sly and the remarks with which he accompanies the play are as good as the play itself . . . 'The Slies are no rogues', as he says of himself. We have a great predilection for this representative of the family; and what makes us like him the better is, that we take him to be of kin (not many degrees removed) to Sancho Panza.

GERVINUS. The scenes between Petruchio and Katherine might be converted into a mere joke, and that of the commonest order. It is sad to think that a man like Garrick has done this. He contracted the piece, under the title of Katherine and Petruchio, into a play of three acts; he expunged the more refined part, the plot for the wooing of Bianca, and he debased the coarse remainder into a clumsy caricature. The acting of the pair was coarsely extravagant, according to the custom which has subsequently maintained its ground; Woodward at the same period acted Petruchio with such fury, that he ran the fork into the finger of his fellow actress (Mrs. Clive), and when he carried her off the stage, threw her down. Thus is the piece still performed in London as a concluding farce, with all disgusting overloadings of vulgar

buffoonery, even after the genuine play was acted again at the Haymarket in 1844, and was received with applause.[1] . . .

The wooer, Petruchio, is fashioned out of coarse clay; he comes not to Padua as Lucentio does, for the sake of study, but to marry for gold. The rich shrew is offered to him in jest, and he enters upon his courtship in a spirit of good-humoured bravado. . . .

Katherine, whom he undertakes to woo, is like a wasp, like a foal that kicks from its halter—pert, quick and determined, but full of good heart; Petruchio already takes pleasure in her nature, because her honest heart overflows in the right place, as in the last act with the widow.

Shakespeare Commentaries, 1874.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

WRITTEN: 1596.

PERFORMED: 'Sundry times publickely acted' before Q1, 1600.
1604. 'On New yeares night we had a play of Robin goode-fellow.' (From a *Letter* of D. Carleton to J. Chamberlain.)

S.R.: 1600, Oct. 8th, by Thomas Fisher.

PUBLISHED: 1600 Q1. 'As it hath beene sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' A fairly good text, possibly printed from Shakespeare's MS.
1619 Q2. Dated 1600. One of the ten plays published by Jaggard in 1619, many of them with false dates. Set up from Q1.
1623 F1. Set up from Q2, but with a few additional stage directions.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: The fantasy is essentially Shakespeare's, but the following books may have furnished hints:
Theseus and Hippolyta: Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.
The two pairs of lovers: Munday's *Two Italian Gentlemen*.
Pyramus and Thisbe: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.
Robin Goodfellow: Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*.
Oberon and fairies: Greene's *James IV*.

[1] This refers to Benjamin Webster's remarkable production: remarkable because of its truth and simplicity at a time when scenery was beginning to overwhelm the plays.

It is possible that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written for a wedding entertainment and converted into a play for the public stage by some alterations to the last act.

In 1692 Betterton produced *The Fairy Queen* at Dorset Garden Theatre, an adaptation of the Fairy and Clown elements of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with music by Purcell, dancing, and elaborate spectacle. Garrick adapted it, and so did F. Reynolds in 1816.

JOHN SPENCER. Forasmuch as this Courte hath beene informed, by Mr Comisary general, of a greate misdemenor committed in the house of the right honorable Lo. Bishopp of Lincolne, by entertaining into his house divers Knights and Ladyes, with many other householders servants, uppon the 27th Septembris (1631), being the Saboth day, to see a playe or tragidie there acted; which began aboute tenn of the clocke at night, and ended about two or three of the clocke in the morning:

Wee do therefore order, and decree, that the Rt honorable John, Lord Bishopp of Lincolne, shall, for his offence, erect a free Schoole in Eaton, or else at Greate Staughton, and endowe the same with 20[l] per ann. for the maintenance of the schoolmaster for ever. . . .

Likewis wee doe order, that Mr Wilson, because hee was a speciall plotter and contriver of this business, and did in such a brutishe manner acte the same with an Asses head (The playe, *M. Nights Dr*[1]); and therefore hee shall, upon Tuisday next, from 6 of the clocke in the morning till six of the clocke at night, sitt in the Porters Lodge at my Lords Bishopps House, with his feete in the stocks, and attyred with his asse head, and a bottle of hay sett before him, and this subscription on his breast:

> Good people I have played the beast,
> And brought ill things to passe:
> I was a man, but thus have made
> My selfe a silly Asse.

A Copie of the Order or Decree (ex officio Comisarii generalis).

PEPYS. To the King's Theatre, where we saw 'Midsummer's Night's Dream', which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.

Diary, 29th Sept. 1662.

JOHNSON. Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts, in their various modes, are well written, and give the kind of pleasure which the author designed. Fairies in his time were much in fashion; common tradition had made them familiar, and Spenser's poem had made them great.

COLERIDGE. Helena's speech:

> I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight, &c.

[1] These words are written in the margin, in another hand.

I am convinced that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout, but especially, and, perhaps, unpleasingly, in this broad determination of ungrateful treachery in Helena, so undisguisedly avowed to herself, and this, too, after the witty cool philosophizing that precedes. The act itself is natural, and the resolve so to act is, I fear, likewise too true a picture of the lax hold which principles have on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination. . . . Still, however just in itself, the representation of this is not poetical; we shrink from it, and cannot harmonize it with the ideal.

HAZLITT. It is astonishing that Shakespear should be considered, not only by foreigners, but by many of our own critics, as a gloomy and heavy writer, who painted nothing but 'gorgons and hydras, and chimeras dire'. His subtlety exceeds that of all other dramatic writers, insomuch that a celebrated person of the present day said that he regarded him rather as a metaphysician than a poet. His delicacy and sportive gaiety are infinite. In the *Midsummer Night's Dream* alone, we should imagine, there is more sweetness and beauty of description than in the whole range of French poetry put together. What we mean is this, that we will produce out of that single play ten passages, to which we do not think any ten passages in the works of the French poets can be opposed, displaying equal fancy and imagery. . . .

It has been suggested to us, that the *Midsummer Night's Dream* would do admirably to get up as a Christmas after-piece; and our prompter proposed that Mr. Kean should play the part of Bottom, as worthy of his great talents. . . .

Alas the experiment has been tried, and has failed; not through the fault of Mr. Kean, who did not play the part of Bottom, nor of Mr. Liston, who did, and who played it well, but from the nature of things. The *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. The spectacle was grand; but the spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled.—Poetry and the stage do not agree well together. The attempt to reconcile them in this instance fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The *ideal* can have no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective; everything there is in the foreground. That which was merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination (as in the case of reading) every circumstance, near or remote, has an equal chance of being kept in mind, and tells according to the mixed impression of all that has been suggested. But the imagination cannot sufficiently qualify the actual impressions of the senses. Any offence given to the eye is not to be got rid of by explanation. Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate *Wall* or *Moonshine*. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so. Monsters

are not shocking, if they are seen at a proper distance. When ghosts appear at mid-day, when apparitions stalk along Cheapside, then may the *Midsummer Night's Dream* be represented without injury at Covent Garden or at Drury Lane. The boards of a theatre and the regions of fancy are not the same thing.

BENEDETTO CROCE. The quintessence of all these comedies (as we may say of *Hamlet* in respect of the great tragedies) is the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here the quick ardours, the inconstancies, the caprices, the illusions, the delusions, every sort of love folly, become embodied and weave a world of their own, as living and as real as that of those who are visited by these affections, tormented or rendered ecstatic, raised on high or hurled downward by them, in such a way that everything is equally real or equally fantastic, as you may please to call it. The sense of dream, of a dream-reality, persists and prevents our feeling the chilly sense of allegory or of apology. The little drama seems born of a smile, so delicate, refined and ethereal it is. Graceful and delicate to a degree is also the setting of the dream, the celebration of the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta and the theatrical performance of the artisans, for these are not merely ridiculous in their clumsiness, they are also childlike and ingenuous, arousing a sort of gay pity: we do not laugh at them: we smile. Oberon and Titania are at variance owing to reciprocal wrongs, and trouble has arisen in the world. Puck obeys the command of Oberon and sets to work, teasing, punishing and correcting. But in performing this duty of punishing and correcting, he too makes mistakes, and the love intrigue becomes more complicated and active. Here we find a resemblance to the rapid passage into opposite states and the strange complications that arose in Italian knightly romances, as the result of drinking the water from one of two opposite fountains whereof one filled the heart with amorous desires, the other turned first ardours to ice.

Ariosto, Shakespeare, and Corneille (*trans. Douglas Ainslie*).

KING JOHN

WRITTEN: 1597.

PERFORMED: First recorded performance 1737.

S.R.: No entry. On Nov. 8th 1623 Blounte and Jaggard entered for their copy of all Shakespeare's plays that had not previously been published as Quartos, except *King John* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, possibly because they passed as reprints of the older plays *The Troublesome Reign* and *The Taming of A Shrew*.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A fairly good text.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: *The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England, with the discouerie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge): also the death of King Iohn at Swinstead Abbey*, 1591.
The Second part of the troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, conteining the death of Arthur Plantaginet, the landing of Lewes, and the poysning of King Iohn at Swinstead Abbey, 1591.
In 1611 the two parts were printed together as being 'Written by W. Sh.'; in 1622 they were reprinted and openly ascribed to 'W. Shakespeare'.
The author of *The Troublesome Reign* is unknown, but was possibly Peele or Marlowe. Shakespeare follows the action of the old play fairly closely, but entirely rewrites it.

Cibber adapted *King John* under the title of *Papal Tyranny*, but the news of its proposed performance led to such a clamour that 'Cibber went to the playhouse, and, without saying a word to anybody, took the play from the prompter's desk and marched off with it in his pocket'. *King John* was revived by Rich in 1737, and by Garrish before the '45, when even Cibber's version ran for ten nights at the rival house of Covent Garden.

JOHNSON. The tragedy of King John, though not written with the utmost power of Shakespeare, is varied with a very pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. The lady's grief is very affecting, and the character of the Bastard contains that mixture of greatness and levity which this author delighted to exhibit.

HAZLITT. *King John* is the last of the historical plays we shall have to speak of; and we are not sorry that it is. If we are to indulge our imaginations, we had rather do it upon an imaginary theme; if we are to find subjects for the exercise of our pity and terror, we prefer seeking them in fictitious danger and fictitious distress. It gives a *soreness* to our feelings of indignation or sympathy, when we know that in tracing the progress of sufferings and crimes, we are treading upon real ground, and recollect that the poet's dream '*denoted a foregone conclusion*'—irrevocable ills, not conjured up by fancy, but placed beyond the reach of poetical justice. That the treachery of King John, the death of Arthur, the grief of Constance, had a real truth in history, sharpens the sense of pain, while it hangs a leaden weight on the heart and the imagination. Something whispers us that we have no right to make a mock of calamities like these, or to turn the truth of things into the puppet and plaything of our fancies. 'To consider thus' may be 'to consider too curiously'; but still we think that the actual truth of the particular events, in proportion

as we are conscious of it, is a drawback on the pleasure as well as the dignity of tragedy. . . .

This, like the other plays taken from English history, is written in a remarkably smooth and flowing style, very different from some of the tragedies, *Macbeth* for instance. The passages consist of a series of single lines, not running into one another. This peculiarity in the versification, which is most common in the three parts of *Henry VI*, has been assigned as a reason why those plays were not written by Shakespear. But the same structure of verse occurs in his other undoubted plays, as in *Richard II* and in *King John.*

RICHARD GARNETT. This mailed tragedy stands to Shakespeare's other plays of English history in the relation of a prologue, not merely as first in order of period, but as depicting a rudimentary condition of English society. It is Shakespeare's one purely mediæval play, for by Henry IV's time a modern element has come in, and Richard II is rather a study of character than a delineation of contemporary manners. 'King John', on the other hand, gives 'the very form and pressure of the time'. It is therefore distinguished by the overwhelming force of the passions represented, and also by their simplicity. Every leading character has a single object, which he pursues with no more deviation than the stress of circumstances demands. John would save his crown and Faulconbridge his country; Constance would vindicate her son's rights and Pandulph would subjugate England to the Pope. There is no complication of motives, no hesitation or qualification; passion is primitive, simple, and Titanic. The language is consequently high pitched throughout, but without exaggeration. Everything is on the grand scale, as it ought to be when the interlocutors are kings, queens, princesses, nobles, and cardinals, and there is hardly a person of humble birth or low calling in the piece.

Introduction to King John.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

WRITTEN: 1597.

PERFORMED: 'As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants' before Q1, 1600.
1604-5. According to the Revels Account it was twice performed at Court (Whitehall) by 'His Maiesties plaiers': 'on Shrousunday', and 'On Shroutusday A play Cauled the Martchant of Venis Againe Commanded By the Kings Maiestie', by 'Shaxberd'.

S.R.: 1598. July 22 'James Robertes. Entred for his copie . . . a booke of the Marchaunt of Venyce. . . . Prouided, that yt bee

not prynted by the said James Robertes or anye other whatsoeuer without lycence first had from the Right honorable the lord Chamberlen.'
1600 '28 Octobris. Thomas Haies . . . by Consent of master Robertes. A booke called the booke of the merchant of Venyce.'
1619. Transferred to Laurence Haies.

PUBLISHED: 1600 Q1. 'The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame cruelty of Shylocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound of his flesh: and the obtayning of Portia by the choyse of three chests. As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' Q1 is a 'good' Quarto, probably printed from Shakespeare's MS.
1619 Q2. One of the ten plays issued by William Jaggard, some of them with false dates.[1] This Q is dated 1600. Set up from Q1.
1623 F1. Set up from Q1.
1637 Q3.
1652 Q4.

MERES: Mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.

SOURCES: The Bond theme came from *Il Pecorone* (The Simpleton), by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino; the Casket theme from the 66th story of Richard Robinson's version of the *Gesta Romanorum*. Shakespeare may have worked from an earlier play, *The Jew*, which has been lost, and which combined the two themes. There are some parallels to Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. The Jew, Roderigo Lopez, was executed in 1594 for the attempted poisoning of Elizabeth and Don Antonio of Portugal.

In 1701 George Granville adapted the *Merchant of Venice* in his *Jew of Venice* which included a masque, Shylock being acted by the comedian Dogget. Macklin and Garrick restored much of Shakespeare and treated Shylock more seriously.

NICHOLAS ROWE. To these I might add, that incomparable Character of *Shylock* the *Jew*, in the *Merchant of* Venice; but tho' we have seen that Play Receiv'd and Acted as a Comedy, and the Part of the *Jew* perform'd by an Excellent Comedian, yet I cannot but think it was design'd Tragically by the Author. There appears in it such a deadly Spirit of Revenge, such a savage Fierceness and Fellness, and such a bloody designation of Cruelty and Mischief, as cannot agree either with the Stile or Characters of Comedy. The Play it self, take it all together, seems to me to be

[1] See p. 202.

one of the most finish'd of any of Shakespear's. The Tale indeed, in that Part relating to the Caskets, and the extravagant and unusual kind of Bond given by *Antonio*, is a little too much remov'd from the Rules of Probability: But taking the Fact for granted, we must allow it to be very beautifully written. There is something in the Friendship of *Antonio to Bassanio* very Great, Generous and Tender. The whole fourth Act, supposing, as I said, the Fact to be probable, is extremely Fine. But there are two Passages that deserve a particular Notice. The first is, what *Portia* says in praise of Mercy, and the other on the Power of Musick.

Preface to Shakespeare, 1709.

JOHNSON. Of The Merchant of Venice the style is even and easy, with few peculiarities of diction, or anomalies of construction. The comick part raises laughter, and the serious fixes expectation. The probability of either one or the other story cannot be maintained. The union of the two actions in one event is, in this drama, eminently happy.

HAZLITT. This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakespear's malignant has outlived Mr. Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, 'baited with the rabble's curse', he becomes a half-favourite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is *a good hater*; 'a man no less sinned against than sinning'. If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for 'the lodged hate he bears Anthonio', which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. . . .

Portia is not a very great favourite with us; neither are we in love with her maid, Nerissa. Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a 'civil doctor', which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespear. We do not admire the scene of the caskets: and object entirely to the Black Prince, Morocchius. We should like Jessica better if she had not deceived and robbed her father, and Lorenzo, if he had not married a Jewess, though he thinks he has a right to wrong a Jew. . . .

When we first went to see Mr. Kean in Shylock, we expected to see, what we had been used to see, a decrepit old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our idea from other actors, not from the play. There is no proof there that Shylock is old, but a single line, 'Anthonio and *old* Shylock, both stand forth,'—which does not imply that he is infirm with age—and the

circumstance that he has a daughter marriageable, which does not imply that he is old at all. It would be too much to say that his body should be made crooked and deformed to answer to his mind, which is bowed down and warped with prejudices and passion. That he has but one idea, is not true; he has more ideas than any other person in the piece; and if he is intense and inveterate in the pursuit of his purpose, he shews the utmost elasticity, vigour, and presence of mind, in the means of attaining it. But so rooted was our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation, that it was only from a careful perusal of the play itself that we saw our error. The stage is not in general the best place to study our author's characters in. It is too often filled with traditional commonplace conceptions of the part, handed down from sire to son, and suited to the taste of *the great vulgar and the small*.—'Tis an unweeded garden: things rank and gross do merely gender in it!' If a man of genius comes once in an age to clear away the rubbish, to make it fruitful and wholesome, they cry, 'Tis a bad school: it may be like nature, it may be like Shakespear, but it is not like us.' Admirable critics!

HEINE. When I saw a performance of this play at Drury Lane, a beautiful pale-faced English woman stood behind me in the box and wept profusely at the end of the fourth act, and called out repeatedly: 'The poor man is wronged.' Her face was of the noblest Greek cast, and her eyes were big and dark. I have never been able to forget those big dark eyes weeping for Shylock.

But thinking of those tears I must count *The Merchant of Venice* among the tragedies, although the framework of the play is ornamented with the gayest masks, satires and love episodes, and the author's real intention was to write a comedy. Perhaps Shakespeare had in mind to create, for the entertainment of the masses, a trained werewolf, a loathsome fabulous monster thirsting for blood, and thereby losing his daughter and his ducats, and becoming a laughing stock. But the genius of the poet, the universal spirit which inspires him is always above his individual will, and so it happened that he expressed in Shylock, in spite of all his glaring grotesqueness, the vindication of an ill-fortuned sect, whom Providence for mysterious reasons has made the butt of the hatred of high and low, and who have not always shown loving kindness in return.

But what am I saying? The genius of Shakespeare rises above the petty jealousies of two religious factions, and his drama shows us really neither Jew nor Christian, but oppressor and oppressed, and the savage rejoicing of the latter when he can pay back with interest the suffered injuries to his callous tormentor. There is not the slightest trace of religious differences in this play: in Shylock Shakespeare merely represents a man whom Nature compels to hate his enemy, and in Antonio and his friends he portrays by no means the disciples of that divine teaching which tells us to love our enemies. . . . In fact, Shakespeare would have written a satire on Christianity if he intended it to be represented by those characters who are hostile to Shylock,

and yet are hardly worthy of unlacing his shoes. The bankrupt Antonio is a weakling without energy, without strong hates and also without strong likes, a dull worm's-heart, whose flesh is really not fit for anything but to bait fish withal. Besides he never returns the borrowed three thousand ducats to the duped Jew. Nor does Bassanio refund his money, and he is a true fortune-hunter, as one English critic calls him; he borrows money to buy fine clothes and entice a wife with a fat dowry. . . .

As for Lorenzo, he is the accomplice of one of the most infamous burglaries, and according to Prussian criminal law he would be pilloried and sentenced to fifteen years hard labour; although he is not only the receiver of stolen ducats and jewels, but also receptive to beauty, to moonlit landscapes and music. As for the other Venetians who appear as Antonio's companions, they do not seem to abhor money either, and when their own friend is in distress they have nothing but words, coined air, for him. . . . However much we must hate Shylock, we cannot blame even him if he despises those people a little.

Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen, 1839.

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. *The Merchant of Venice* is not for many lovers of Shakespeare one of their favourite plays. Its theatricality and stage-effectiveness puts a cheat upon them which they afterwards resent. But the other day, when I happened to look into it—'The moon shines bright'—these first words of the last Act put a kind of magic on me:

> In such a night as this,
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
> And they did make no noise,—
> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage,—

when Lorenzo and Jessica were out-nighting each other in such a night as this, what could I do but revel in the moonlight and enchanted echoes of this scene?

> Sit, Jessica: look, how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Poetry was given to man, Goethe said, to make him satisfied with himself and with his lot. Certainly for me poetry, either in verse or prose, exquisitely performs this function. I may be old and cross and ill, a wasted life may lie behind me, and the grave yawn close in front. I may have lost my faith, my

illusion, my teeth, my reputation and umbrella. What does it matter? It doesn't matter in the least! Reading Lorenzo's words,

> Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!

off I go into the enchanted forest, into the Age of Gold. Life ceases to be brief, sad, enigmatic; I am perfectly satisfied with it. What more is there indeed to ask for? I taste a joy beyond the reach of fate; *le bonheur, l'impossible bonheur,* is mine. I am (to express myself in soberer terms) simply kidnapped into heaven. I sit with the Gods and quaff their nectar; quaff indeed a nectar more generous than their own, since I, alone of the immortals, taste the aroma of this aromatic floating, orchard plot of earth, which, could they but sip its fragrance, how gladly would the Gods descend from their golden chairs, take upon themselves the burden of earthly sin, and provoke another Flood! Even that 'fading mansion', my aching, coughing body, becomes a vehicle and instrument of music, and like a battered old violin, shivers and vibrates with tunable delight. 'Therefore the poet', as Lorenzo went on to tell Jessica,

> 'Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and flood;
> Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
> But music for the time doth change his nature.'

If ever again I am so stockish or full of rage as to deny the genius of Shakespeare, the music of this scene will, in the magical five minutes it takes to read it through, charm me back from my backsliding.

On Reading Shakespeare.

HENRY THE FOURTH

PART I

WRITTEN: 1597.

PERFORMED: 1597?
1600 March 8th. The Lord Chamberlain entertained an Ambassador with the play *Sir John Old Castell.*
1613. Both *Sir John Falstaffe* and *The Hotspur* were acted at 'The Magnificent Marriage of Frederick Count Palatine and the Lady Elizabeth'.
1625. The *First Part of Sir John Falstaff* at Whitehall.
1638. 'At the Cocpit the 29th of May the princes berthnyght—ould Castel.'

S.R.: 1598 Feb. 25th. by Andrew Wise; transferred to Matthew Law in 1603.

PUBLISHED: 1598 Q1. 'The History of Henrie the Fourth; With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir Iohn Falstalffe.' Q1 is the authoritative text. later Qq being set up from their immediate predecessors.
1599 Q2. 'Newly corrected by W. Shake-speare.'
1604 Q3; 1608 Q4; 1613 Q5; 1622 Q6; 1632 Q7; 1639 Q8, 1623 F1. Set up from Q5.

PART II

WRITTEN: 1598.

PERFORMED: 'Sundrie times publikely acted' before Q, 1600.
1619. At Court?

S.R.: 1600 Aug. 23rd. by Andrew Wise and William Aspley.

PUBLISHED: 1600 Q. 'The Second Part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of sir Iohn Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' Probably set up from a MS used as a prompt-copy.
1623 F1. Contains 168 lines omitted from Q, but leaves out 40 lines of Q. Probably set up from a theatrical MS, possibly that used for Q which had been modified.

MERES: 1598 Mentions *Henry the* 4 in his *Palladis Tamia.*

SOURCES: Holinshed's *Chronicle* for the historical theme. *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, an anonymous play, gave hints for the comic scenes.

In the play as Shakespeare originally wrote it Sir John Falstaff must have been called Sir John Oldcastle. This is apparent from the play on the word in Part I, i, 2, where Falstaff is called 'my old lad of the castle', and from the unmetrical line 'Away, good Ned, Falstaff sweats to death'. Shakespeare probably took the name from the anonymous play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and then in deference to the Lords Cobham, who were descendants of Oldcastle and prominent at Court, changed it to Falstaff before publication. He chose the new name for two reasons: Falstaff like Oldcastle was 'Sir John' and this would necessitate fewer alterations; and Sir John Fastolfe in 1 *Henry VI* had a kind of alacrity in running away. Un-

fortunately for Shakespeare the real Sir John Fastolfe was no more a coward than Sir John Oldcastle, and the substitution led to new protests.

LEONARD DIGGES.

> Yet these sometimes, even at a friend's desire
> Acted, have scarce defraied the Seacoale fire,
> And doore-keepers: when let but *Falstaffe* come,
> *Hall*, *Poines*, the rest you scarce shall have a roome
> All is so pester'd.
>
> *Commendatory Verses to Shakespeare's Poems*, 1640.

RICHARD JAMES. A young Gentle Lady of your acquaintance, having read ye works of Shakespeare, made me this question. How Sr John Falstaffe, or Fastolf, as he is written in ye Statute Book of Maudlin Colledge in Oxford, where everye day that society were bound to make memorie of his soul, could be dead in ye time of Harrie ye Fift and again live in ye time of Harrie ye Sixt to be banished for cowardice: Whereto I made answear that it was one of those humours and mistakes for which Plato banisht all poets out of his commonwealth. That Sr John Falstaffe was in those times a noble valiaunt souldier, as apeeres by a book in ye Heralds Office dedicated unto him by a Herald who had binne with him, if I well remember, for the space of 25 yeeres in ye French wars; that he seems also to have binne a man of learning, because, in a Library of Oxford, I find a book of dèdicating Churches sent from him for a present unto Bishop Wainflete, and inscribed with his own hand. That in Shakespeares first shew of Harrie the fift, the person with which he undertook to playe a buffone was not Falstaffe, but Sir Jhon Oldcastle, and that offence beinge worthily taken by Personages descended from his title (as peradventure by many others allso whoe ought to have him in honourable memorie) the poet was putt to make an ignorant shifte of abusing Sir Jhon Falstophe, a man not inferior of Vertue, though not so famous in pietie as the other, who gave witnesse unto the truth of our reformation with a constant and resolute Martyrdom, unto which he was pursued by the Priests, Bishops, Moncks, and Friers of those days.

Epistle to Sir Harry Bourchier, *c.* 1625.

THOMAS FULLER. John Fastolfe Knight—the *Stage* hath been overbold with his memory, making him a *Thrasonical Puff*, & emblem of *Mock-valour*.

True it is, *Sir John Oldcastle* did first bear the brunt of the one, being made the *make-sport* in all plays for a *coward*. It is easily known out of what *purse* this black *peny* came. The *Papists* railed on him for a *Heretick*, and therefore he must also be a *coward*, though indeed he was a *man* of *arms*, *every inch of him*, and as valiant as any of his age.

Now as I am glad that *Sir John Oldcastle* is *put out*, so I am sorry that *Sir John Fastolfe* is *put in*, to relieve his memory in this base service, to be

the *anvil* for every *dull wit* to strike upon. Nor is our Comedian excusable, by some alteration of his name, writing him *Sir John Falstafe* (and making him the *property* of *pleasure* for King *Henry* the fifth, to abuse) seeing the *vicinity* of sounds intrench on the memory of *that worthy Knight*, and few do heed the *inconsiderable difference* in spelling of their name.

Worthies of England, 1662.

PEPYS. In Paul's Church-yard I bought the play of Henry the Fourth, and so went to the new Theatre [Killigrew's] and saw it acted; but my expectation being too great, it did not please me, as otherwise I believe it would; and my having a book, I believe did spoil it a little. (31 *Dec.* 1660.)

From thence to the Theatre, and saw Harry the 4th, a good play. (4 *June* 1661.)

To the King's playhouse, and there saw 'Henry the Fourth': and, contrary to expectation, was pleased in nothing more than in Cartwright's speaking of Falstaffe's speech about 'What is Honour?' . . . It was observable how a gentleman of good habit sitting just before us, eating of some fruit in the midst of the play, did drop down as dead, being choked; but with much ado Orange Moll did thrust her finger down his throat, and brought him to life again. (2 *Nov.* 1667.)

So I to the other two playhouses into the pit, to gaze up and down, and there did by this means, for nothing, see an act in 'The Schoole of Compliments' at the Duke of York's house, and 'Henry the Fourth' at the King's house; but, not liking either of the plays, I took my coach again, and home. (7 *Jan.* 1668.)

To the King's house, and saw a piece of 'Henry the Fourth'. (18 *Sept.* 1668.)

DRYDEN. As for Falstaff, he is not properly one humour, but a miscellany of humours or images, drawn from so many several men: that wherein he is singular is his wit, or those things he says *præter expectatum*, unexpected by the audience; his quick evasions, when you imagine him surprised, which, as they are extremely diverting of themselves, so receive a great addition from his person; for the very sight of such an unwieldy old debauched fellow is a comedy alone.

An Essay of Dramatic Poesy, 1668.

JOHNSON. None of Shakespeare's plays are more read than the first and second parts of Henry IV. Perhaps no author has ever in two plays afforded so much delight. The great events are interesting, for the fate of kingdoms depends upon them; the slighter occurrences are diverting, and, except one or two, sufficiently probable; the incidents are multiplied with wonderful fertility of invention, and the characters diversified with the utmost nicety of discernment, and the profoundest skill in the nature of man.

The prince, who is the hero both of the comick and tragick part, is a young man of great abilities and violent passions, whose sentiments are right,

though his actions are wrong; whose virtues are obscured by negligence, and whose understanding is dissipated by levity. In his idle hours he is rather loose than wicked; and when the occasion forces out his latent qualities, he is great without effort, and brave without tumult. The trifler is roused into a hero, and the hero again reposes in the trifler. The character is great, original and just.

Percy is a rugged soldier, cholerick and quarrelsome, and has only the soldier's virtues, generosity and courage.

But Falstaff, unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee! thou compound of sense and vice; of sense which may be admired, but not esteemed; of vice which may be despised, but hardly detested. Falstaff is a character loaded with faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief and a glutton, a coward and a boaster, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous, and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirizes in their absence those whom he lives by flattering. He is familiar with the prince only as an agent of vice, but of this familiarity he is so proud, as not only to be supercilious and haughty with common men, but to think his interest of importance to the duke of Lancaster. Yet the man thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety, by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy scapes and sallies of levity, which make sport, but raise no envy. It must be observed, that he is stained with no enormous or sanguinary crimes, so that his licentiousness is not so offensive but that it may be borne for his mirth.

The moral to be drawn from this representation is, that no man is more dangerous than he that, with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion, when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff.

MAURICE MORGANN. Tho' I have considered *Falstaff's* character as relative only to one single quality, yet so much has been said, that it cannot escape the reader's notice that he is a character made up by *Shakespeare* wholly of incongruities;—a man at once young and old, enterprizing and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality; a knave without malice, a liar withour deceit; and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier, without either dignity, decency, or honour: This is a character, which, though it may be decompounded, could not, I believe, have been formed, nor the ingredients of it duly mingled upon any receipt whatever: It required the hand of *Shakespeare* himself to give to every particular part a relish of the whole, and of the whole to every particular part;—alike the same incongruous, identical *Falstaff*, whether to the grave Chief Justice he vainly talks of his youth, and offers to *caper for a thousand*; or cries to Mrs. Doll, '*I am old, I am old*', though she is seated on his lap, and he is courting

her for busses. How *Shakespeare* could furnish out sentiment of so extraordinary a composition, and supply it with such appropriated and characteristic language, humour and wit, I cannot tell; but I may, however, venture to infer, and that confidently, that he who so well understood the uses of incongruity, and that laughter was to be raised by the opposition of qualities in the same man, and not by their agreement or conformity, would never have attempted to raise mirth by showing us Cowardice in a Coward unattended by Pretence, and softened by every excuse of age, corpulence, and infirmity: And of this we cannot have a more striking proof than his furnishing this very character, on one instance of real terror, however excusable, with boast, braggadocio, and pretence, exceeding that of all other stage Cowards the whole length of his superior wit, humour, and invention.

On the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff, 1777.

HAZLITT. If Shakespear's fondness for the ludicrous sometimes led to faults in his tragedies (which was not often the case) he has made us amends by the character of Falstaff. This is perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. Sir John carries a most portly presence in the mind's eye; and in him, not to speak it profanely, 'we behold the fulness of the spirit of wit and humour bodily'. We are as well acquainted with his person as his mind, and his jokes come upon us with double force and relish from the quantity of flesh through which they make their way, as he shakes his fat sides with laughter, or 'lards the lean earth as he walks along'. Other comic characters seem, if we approach and handle them, to resolve themselves into air, 'into thin air'; but this is embodied and palpable to the grossest apprehension: it lies 'three fingers deep upon the ribs', it plays about the lungs and the diaphragm with all the force of animal enjoyment. His body is like a good estate to his mind, from which he receives rents and revenues of profit and pleasure in kind, according to its extent, and the richness of the soil. Wit is often a meagre substitute for pleasurable sensation; an effusion of spleen and petty spite at the comforts of others, from feeling none in itself. Falstaff's wit is an emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good-humour and good-nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter and good-fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease, and over-contentment with himself and others. He would not be in character, if he were not so fat as he is; for there is greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests, as he does his body with sack and sugar. He carves out his jokes, as he would a capon or a haunch of venison, where there is *cut and come again*; and pours out upon them the oil of gladness. His tongue drops fatness, and in the chambers of his brain 'it snows of meat and drink'. He keeps up perpetual holiday and open house, and we live with him in a round of invitations to a rump and dozen.—Yet we are not to suppose that he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupefy his other faculties, but 'ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapours that environ

it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes'. His imagination keeps up the ball after his senses have done with it. He seems to have even a greater enjoyment of the freedom from restraint, of good cheer, of his ease, of his vanity, in the ideal exaggerated description which he gives of them, than in fact. He never fails to enrich his discourse with allusions to eating and drinking, but we never see him at table. He carries his own larder about with him, and he is himself 'a tun of man'. His pulling out the bottle in the field of battle is a joke to shew his contempt for glory accompanied with danger, his systematic adherence to his Epicurean philosophy in the most trying circumstances. Again, such is his deliberate exaggeration of his own vices, that it does not seem quite certain whether the account of his hostess's bill, found in his pocket, with such an out-of-the-way charge for capons and sack with only one half-penny-worth of bread, was not put there by himself as a trick to humour the jest upon his favourite propensities, and as a conscious caricature of himself. He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, etc., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him; for he is all these as much to amuse others as to gratify himself. He openly assumes all these characters to shew the humorous part of them. The unrestrained indulgence of his own ease, appetites, and convenience, has neither malice nor hypocrisy in it. In a word, he is an actor in himself almost as much as upon the stage, and we no more object to the character of Falstaff in a moral point of view than we should think of bringing an excellent comedian, who should represent him to the life, before one of the police offices. We only consider the number of pleasant lights in which he puts certain foibles (the more pleasant as they are opposed to the received rules and necessary restraints of society), and do not trouble ourselves about the consequences resulting from them, for no mischievous consequences do result. Sir John is old as well as fat, which gives a melancholy retrospective tinge to the character; and by the disparity between his inclinations and his capacity for enjoyment, makes it still more ludicrous and fantastical.

The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love; instinctive evasions of everything that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency. His very size floats him out of all his difficulties in a sea of rich conceits; and he turns round on the pivot of his convenience, with every occasion and at a moment's warning. His natural repugnance to every unpleasant thought or circumstance, of itself makes light of objections, and provokes the most extravagant and licentious answers in his own justification. His indifference to truth puts no check upon his invention, and the more improbable and unexpected his contrivances are, the more happily does he seem to be delivered of them, the anticipation of their effect acting as a stimulus to the gaiety of his fancy. The success of one adventurous sally gives him spirits to undertake another: he deals always in round numbers, and his exaggerations and excuses are 'open, palpable, monstrous as the father that begets them'. . . .

The heroic and serious part of these two plays founded on the story of Henry IV is not inferior to the comic and farcical. The characters of Hotspur

and Prince Henry are two of the most beautiful and dramatic, both in themselves and from contrast, that ever were drawn. They are the essence of chivalry. We like Hotspur the best upon the whole, perhaps because he was unfortunate. . . .

The truth is, that we never could forgive the Prince's treatment of Falstaff; though perhaps Shakespear knew what was best, according to the history, the nature of the times, and of the man. We speak only as dramatic critics. Whatever terror the French in those days might have of Henry V, yet, to the readers of poetry at present, Falstaff is the better man of the two. We think of him and quote him oftener.

GEORG BRANDES. Shakespeare felt himself attracted to the hero, the young Prince, by some of the most deep-rooted sympathies of his nature. We have seen how vividly and persistently the contrast between appearance and reality preoccupied him; we saw it last in *The Merchant of Venice*. In proportion as he was irritated and repelled by people who try to pass for more than they are, by creatures of affectation and show, even by women who resort to artificial colours and false hair in quest of a beauty not their own, so his heart beat warmly for any one who had appearances against him, and concealed great qualities behind an unassuming and misinterpreted exterior. His whole life, indeed, was just such a paradox—his soul was replete with the greatest treasures, with rich humanity and inexhaustible genius, while externally he was little better than a light-minded mountebank, touting, with quips and quiddities, for the ha'pence of the mob. Now and then, as his Sonnets show, the pressure of this outward prejudice so weighed upon him that he came near to being ashamed of his position in life, and of the tinsel world in which his days were passed; and then he felt with double force the inward need to assure himself how great may be the gulf between the apparent and the real worth of human character.

Moreover, this view of his material gave him an occasion, before tuning the heroic string of his lyre, to put in a word for the right of high-spirited youth to have its fling, and indirectly to protest against the hasty judgments of narrow-minded moralists and Puritans. He would here show that great ambitions and heroic energy could pass unscathed through the dangers even of exceedingly questionable diversions. This Prince of Wales was 'merry England' and 'martial England' in one and the same person.

William Shakespeare (*trans. William Archer*).

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

WRITTEN: 1598.

PERFORMED: 'Divers times acted' before Q1, 1602.
1604 Nov. 4th, at Whitehall, 'By his Maiesties plaiers'.
1638 Nov. 15th, 'At the Cocpit'.

S.R.: 1602 Jan. 18th, by John Busby, and assigned to Arthur Johnson.

PUBLISHED: 1602 Q1. 'A Most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors, of Syr Hugh the Welch Knight, Iustice Shallow, and his wise Cousin M. Slender. With the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll, and Corporall Nym. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines seruants. Both before her Maiestie, and else-where.' A 'bad' Quarto, based on a report, probably that of the actor who played the Host.
1619 Q2. One of the ten plays printed by Jaggard in 1619, many of them with false dates. Set up from Q1.
1623 F1. A good text.
1630 Q3. Set up from F1.

SOURCES: Giovanni Straparola's *Le Tredeci Piacevoli Notte* (1550), Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* (1550), and Richard Tarlton's *Newes Out of Purgatory* (1590), all deal with the lover hidden in household goods.

There are obvious references to the visit of the Count of Mömpelgart to England, including Windsor, in 1592, and to that of his ambassador (also to Windsor) in 1595, who urged his master's claim to the Garter promised by Elizabeth. Mömpelgart was elected to the Order in 1597; in 1598 he sent an embassy to express his gratitude, and in 1600 a third embassy to obtain the insignia. The investiture was eventually granted by James I in 1603. (Cf. 'Cosen *garmombles*' of IV. 5, the *Garter* Inn, and the Garter references in V. 5.)

The Merry Wives was adapted, or rather perverted, by John Dennis in his *The Comicall Gallant*, 1702.

JOHN DENNIS. That this Comedy was not despicable, I guess'd for several Reasons: First, I knew very well, that it had pleas'd one of the greatest Queens that ever was in the World, great not only for her Wisdom in the Arts of Government, but for her Knowledge of Polite Learning, and her nice taste of the Drama, for such a taste we may be sure she had, by the relish which she had of the Ancients. This Comedy was written at her Command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it Acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as Tradition tells us, very well pleas'd at the Representation.

Epistle to the Comicall Gallant, 1702.

PEPYS. After dinner went to the New Theatre (Killigrew's), and there I saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' acted—the humours of the country gentleman and the French doctor very well done, but the rest but very poorly, and Sir J. Falstaffe as bad as any. (6 *Dec.* 1660.)

To the Theatre, and saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' ill done. (25 *Sept.* 1661.)

To the Duke's house; where a new play. The King and Court there: the house full, and an act begun. And so we went to the King's, and there saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'; which did not please me at all, in no part of it. (13 *Aug.* 1667.)

DRYDEN. In the mechanic beauties of the plot, which are the observation of the three Unities, Time, Place, and Action, they (Shakespeare and Fletcher) are both deficient; but Shakespeare most. Ben Jonson reformed those errors in his comedies, yet one of Shakespeare's was regular before him; which is, *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*

Preface to Troilus and Cressida, 1679.

CHARLES GILDON. The *Fairys* in the fifth Act makes a Handsome Complement to the Queen, in her Palace of *Windsor*, who had oblig'd him to write a Play of *Sir John Falstaff* in Love, and which I am very well assured he perform'd in a Fortnight; a prodigious Thing, when all is so well contriv'd, and carry'd on without the least Confusion.

Remarks on the Plays of Shakespear, 1710.

RICHARD DAVIES. (Shakespeare was) much given to all unluckinesse in stealing venison & Rabbits particularly from Sr Lucy who had him oft whipt & sometimes Imprisoned & at last made Him fly his Native Country to his great Advancemt. but His reveng was so great that he is his Justice Clodpate and calls him a great man & yt in allusion to his name bore three lowses rampant for his Arms.

(Davies was Rector of Sapperton, Glos., 1695-1703.)

WILLIAM OLDYS. There was a very aged gentleman living in the neighbourhood of Stratford, (where he died fifty years since,) who had not only heard, from several old people in that town, of Shakespeare's transgression, but could remember the first stanza of that bitter ballad,[1]

[1] 'He had, by a Misfortune common enough to young Fellows, fallen into Ill Company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of Deer-stealing, engag'd him with them more than once in robbing a Park that belong'd to Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot*, near *Stratford*. For this he was prosecuted by that Gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill Usage, he made a Ballad upon him. And tho' this, probably the first Essay of his Poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the Prosecution against him to that degree, that he was oblig'd to leave his Business and Family in *Warwickshire*, for some time, and shelter himself in *London*.'—*Nicholas Rowe*, 1709.

which, repeating to one of his acquaintance, he preserved it in writing; and here it is, neither better nor worse, but faithfully transcribed from the copy which his relation very courteously communicated to me.

A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse,
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it:
He thinks himselfe greate,
Yet an asse in his state,
We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
Sing lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it.

Contemptible as this performance must now appear, at the time when it was written it might have sufficient power to irritate a vain, weak, and vindictive magistrate; especially as it was affixed to several of his park-gates, and consequently published among his neighbours.—It may be remarked likewise, that the jingle on which it turns, occurs in the first scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Quoted by G. Steevens in his *Works of Shakespeare*, from a MS of Oldys (c. 1750).

JOHNSON. Of this play there is a tradition preserved by Mr. Rowe, that it was written at the command of queen Elizabeth, who was so delighted with the character of Falstaff, that she wished it to be diffused through more plays; but, suspecting that it might pall by continued uniformity, directed the poet to diversify his manner, by showing him in love. No task is harder than that of writing to the ideas of another. Shakespeare knew what the queen, if the story be true, seems not to have known, that by any real passion of tenderness, the selfish craft, the careless jollity, and the lazy luxury of Falstaff must have suffered so much abatement, that little of his former cast would have remained. Falstaff could not love, but by ceasing to be Falstaff. He could only counterfeit love, and his professions could be prompted, not by the hope of pleasure, but by money. Thus the poet approached as near as he could to the work enjoined him; yet having, perhaps, in the former plays, completed his own idea, seems not to have been able to give Falstaff all his former power of entertainment.

This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of the personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated, than, perhaps, can be found in any other play.

Whether Shakespeare was the first that produced upon the English stage the effect of language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciation, I cannot certainly decide. This mode of forming ridiculous characters can confer praise only on him who originally discovered it, for it requires not much of either wit or judgment; its success must be derived almost wholly from the player, but its power in a skilful mouth even he that despises it is unable to resist.

The conduct of this drama is deficient; the action begins and ends often before the conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience; but its general power, that power by which all works of genius shall finally be tried, is such, that, perhaps, it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.

HAZLITT. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is no doubt a very amusing play, with a great deal of humour, character, and nature in it: but we should have liked it much better, if any one else had been the hero of it, instead of Falstaff. We could have been contented if Shakespear had not been 'commanded to show the knight in love'. Wits and philosophers, for the most part, do not shine in that character; and Sir John himself, by no means, comes off with flying colours. Many people complain of the degradation and insults to which Don Quixote is so frequently exposed in his various adventures. But what are the unconscious indignities which he suffers compared with the sensible mortifications which Falstaff is made to bring upon himself? What are the blows and buffetings which the Don receives from the staves of the Yanguesian carriers or from Sancho Panza's more hard-hearted hands, compared with the contamination of the buck-basket, the disguise of the fat woman of Brentford, and the horns of Herne the hunter, which are discovered on Sir John's head? In reading the play, we indeed wish him well through all these discomfitures, but it would have been as well if he had not got into them. Falstaff in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is not the man he was in the two parts of *Henry IV*. His wit and eloquence have left him. Instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies: he is merely a designing, bare-faced knave, and an unsuccessful one. The scene with Ford as Master Brook, and that with Simple, Slender's man, who comes to ask after the Wise Woman, are almost the only ones in which his old intellectual ascendancy appears. He is like a person recalled to the stage to perform an unaccustomed and ungracious part; and in which we perceive only 'some faint sparks of those flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the hearers in a roar'. But the single scene with Doll Tearsheet, or Mrs. Quickly's account of his desiring 'to eat some of housewife Keach's prawns', and telling her 'to be no more so familiarity with such people', is worth the whole of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* put together. . . .

Shallow himself has little of his consequence left. But his cousin, Slender, makes up for the deficiency. He is a very potent piece of imbecility. In him the pretensions of the worthy Gloucestershire family are well kept up, and immortalised. He and his friend Sackerson and his book of songs and his love of Anne Page and his having nothing to say to her can never be forgotten. It is the only first-rate character in the play: but it is in that class. Shakespear is the only writer who was as great in describing weakness as strength.

GEORG BRANDES. His task was now to entertain a queen and a court 'with their hatred of ideas, their insensibility to beauty, their hard, efficient manners, and their demand for impropriety'. As it amused the

London populace to see kings and princes upon the stage, so it entertained the Queen and her court to have a glimpse into the daily life of the middle classes, so remote from their own, to look into their rooms, and hear their chat with the doctor and the parson, to see a picture of the prosperity and contentment which flourished at Windsor right under the windows of the Queen's summer residence, and to witness the downright virtue and merry humour of the red-cheeked, buxom townswomen. Thus was the keynote of the piece determined. Thus it became more prosaic and bourgeois than any other play of Shakespeare's. *The Merry Wives* is indeed the only one of his works which is almost entirely written in prose, and the only one of his comedies in which, the scene being laid in English, he has taken as his subject the contemporary life of the English middle classes. It is not quite unlike the more farcical of Molière's comedies, which also were often written with an eye to royal and courtly audiences. All the more significant is the fact that Shakespeare has found it impossible to content himself with thus dwelling on the common earth, and has introduced at the close a fairy-dance and fairy-song, as though from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* itself, executed, it is true, by children and young girls dressed up as elves, but preserving throughout the air and style of genuine fairy scenes.

William Shakespeare (*trans. William Archer*).

KING HENRY THE FIFTH

WRITTEN: 1599. In the Epilogue to *Henry IV Part* 2 Shakespeare had written, 'Our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katharine of France: where, for any thing I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat.' The reference to Essex in the Prologue to Act V suggests that most of the play was written between Essex's departure for Ireland on 27 March 1599 and his return on 28 September.

PERFORMED: 'Sundry times played' before Q1 1600. It may have been the first play to have been performed in the newly built Globe theatre, 'This wooden O' of the Prologue.
1605 Jan. 7th: a performance at Whitehall 'By his Maiesties plaiers'.

S.R.: 1600. '4 Augusti. Henry the ffift, a booke. to be staied.' This may have been an attempt by the Chamberlain's Men to prevent piratical publication.
1600. 14 August. Thomas Pavier entered for his copy.

PUBLISHED: 1600 Q1. 'The Chronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battel fought at Agin Court in France. Togither with Auntient

Pistoll. As it hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Printed by Thomas Creede, for Tho. Millington, and Iohn Busby.' A 'bad' Quarto: a reported version, possibly that of an actor who played either Gower, Exeter, or the Governor of Harfleur. The fact that the Prologue, Epilogue, Choruses, three scenes, and long passages are omitted suggests that the report was based on a shortened version for provincial performance.
1602 Q2. Set up from Q1.
1619 Q3. Set up from Q1. Dated 1608. One of the ten plays published in 1619 by Jaggard, many of them with false dates.
1623 F1. A fair text.

SOURCES: Holinshed's *Chronicle.*
The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth. (The wooing scene occurs in this play.)

William Fluellen and George Bardolfe were fellow recusants with Shakespeare's father, John, in 1592.

Henry V was adapted by Aaron Hill about 1730. The 'noble play of Henry the Fifth' seen by Pepys was written by Lord Orrery.

JOHNSON. This play has many scenes of high dignity, and many of easy merriment. The character of the king is well supported, except in his courtship, where he has neither the vivacity of Hal, nor the grandeur of Henry. The humour of Pistol is very happily continued; his character has, perhaps, been the model of all the bullies that have yet appeared on the English stage.

The lines given to the chorus have many admirers; but the truth is, that in them a little may be praised, and much must be forgiven: nor can it be easily discovered why the intelligence given by the chorus is more necessary in this play than in many others where it is omitted. The great defect of this play is the emptiness and narrowness of the last act, which a very little diligence might have easily avoided.

HAZLITT. Henry V is a very favourite monarch with the English nation, and he appears to have been also a favourite with Shakespeare, who labours hard to apologise for the actions of the king, by shewing us the character of the man, as 'the king of good fellows'. He scarcely deserves this honour. He was fond of war and low company: we know little else of him. He was careless, dissolute and ambitious;—idle, or doing mischief. In private, he seemed to have no idea of the common decencies of life, which he subjected to a kind of regal licence; in public affairs, he seemed to have no idea of any rule of right or wrong, but brute force, glossed over with a little religious hypocrisy and archiepiscopal advice. His principles did not change with his situation and professions. His adventure on Gadshill was a prelude to the affair of Agincourt, only a bloodless one; Falstaff was a puny prompter of

violence and outrage, compared with the pious and politic Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave the king *carte blanche*, in a genealogical tree of his family, to rob and murder in circles of latitude and longitude abroad—to save the possessions of the Church at home. This appears in the speeches in Shakespear, where the hidden motives that actuate princes and their advisers in war and policy are better laid open than in speeches from the throne or woolsack. Henry, because he did not know how to govern his own kingdom, determined to make war upon his neighbours. Because his own title to the crown was doubtful, he laid claim to that of France. Because he did not know how to exercise the enormous power, which had just dropped into his hands, to any one good purpose, he immediately undertook (a cheap and obvious resource of sovereignty) to do all the mischief he could. . . . Henry declares his resolution 'when France is his, to bend it to his awe, or break it all to pieces'—a resolution worthy of a conqueror, to destroy all that he cannot enslave; and what adds to the joke, he lays all the blame of the consequences of his ambition on those who will not submit tamely to his tyranny . . . Henry V, it is true, was a hero, a king of England, and the conqueror of the king of France. Yet we feel little love or admiration for him. He was a hero, that is, he was ready to sacrifice his own life for the pleasure of destroying thousands of other lives: he was a king of England, but not a constitutional one, and we only like kings according to the law; lastly he was a conqueror of the French king, and for this we dislike him less than if he had conquered the French people. How then do we like him? We like him in the play. There he is a very amiable monster, a very splendid pageant. As we like to gaze at a panther or a young lion in their cages in the Tower, and catch a pleasing horror from their glistening eyes, their velvet paws, and dreadless roar, so we take a very romantic, heroic, patriotic, and poetical delight in the boasts and feats or our younger Harry, as they appear on the stage and are confined to lines of ten syllables; where no blood follows the stroke that wounds our ears, where no harvest bends beneath horses' hoofs, no city flames, no little child is butchered, no dead men's bodies are found piled on heaps and festering the next morning—in the orchestra! . . .

It is worth observing that in all these plays, which give an admirable picture to the spirit of the *good old times*, the moral inference does not at all depend upon the nature of the actions, but on the dignity or meanness of the persons committing them. 'The eagle England' has a right 'to be in prey', but 'the weazel Scot' has none 'to come sneaking to her nest', which she has left to pounce upon others. Might was right, without equivocation or disguise, in that heroic and chivalrous age. . . .

The comic parts of *Henry V* are very inferior to those of *Henry IV*. Falstaff is dead, and without him, Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph are satellites without a sun.

SIR SIDNEY LEE. Shakespeare's 'Henry V' is as far as possible removed from what is generally understood by drama. It is without intrigue or entanglement; it propounds no problems of psychology; its definite

motive is neither comic nor tragic; women play in it the slenderest part; it lacks plot in any customary sense. In truth, the piece is epic narrative, or rather heroic biography, adapted to the purposes of the stage. The historical episodes—political debate, sieges, encampments, battles, diplomatic negotiations—with which the scenes deal, are knit together by no more complex bond than the chronological succession of events, the presence in each of the same *dramatis personæ* and the predominance in each of the same character—the English King, in whose mouth the dramatist sets nearly a third of all the lines of the play. A few of the minor personages excite genuine interest, and there are some attractive scenes of comic relief, but these have no organic connection with the central thread of the play. Shakespeare's efforts were mainly concentrated on the portraiture of 'this star of England', King Henry, whom he deliberately chose out of the page of history as the fittest representative of the best distinctive type of English character. . . .

Broadly speaking, Shakespeare has in no other play cast a man so entirely in the heroic mould as King Henry. Such failings as are indicated are kept in the background. On his virtues alone a full blaze of light is shed. Flawless heroines Shakespeare had depicted in plenty, but Henry is his only male character who, when drawn at full length, betrays no crucial or invincible defect of will, or mind, or temper. The Bastard in 'King John' approaches him most closely in heroic stature, but the Bastard is not drawn at full length. Certainly no other of Shakespeare's monarchs is comparable with Henry V. In the rest of his English historical plays he tells sad stories of the deaths of the kings, who are ruined mainly by moral flaws in their character. 'Richard II.', 'Richard III', 'King John', even 'Henry IV', illustrate the unworthiness of those who thirst for kingly glory, the brittleness rather than the brilliance of the royal estate. Only Henry V proves himself deserving of truly royal prosperity, of which the last scene of the play seems to guarantee him lasting enjoyment. Alone in Shakespeare's gallery of English monarchs does Henry's portrait evoke at once a joyous sense of satisfaction in the high potentialities of human character and a sense of pride among Englishmen that a man of his mettle is of English race.

Introduction to Henry V.

JOHN MASEFIELD. The play ought to be seen and judged as a part of the magnificent tragic series. Detached from its place, as it has been, it loses all its value. It is not greatly poetical in itself. It is popular. It is about a popular hero who is as common as those who love him. But in its place it is tremendous. Henry V is the one commonplace man in the eight plays. He alone enjoys success and worldly happiness. He enters Shakespeare's vision to reap what his broken-hearted father sowed. He passes out of Shakespeare's vision to beget the son who dies broken-hearted after bringing all to waste again.

'Hear him but reason in divinity',

cries the admiring archbishop. Yet this searcher of the spirit woos his bride like a butcher, and jokes among his men like a groom. He has the knack of life that fits human beings for whatever is animal in human affairs.

William Shakespeare.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

WRITTEN: 1599.

PERFORMED: 'Sundrie times publikely acted' before Q.
Much Ado was one of the plays performed at Whitehall at the wedding festivities of the Count Palatine and Elizabeth, daughter of James I, 1613.

S.R.: 1600. '4 Augusti
The Commedie of muche A doo about nothing a booke } to be staied.'
This may have been an attempt by the Chamberlain's Men to prevent piratical publication.
1600. '23 Augusti. Andrew Wise William Aspley. Entred for their copies vnder the handes of the wardens Two bookes, the one called Muche a Doo about nothinge ... Wrytten by master Shakespeare. xij^{d}.'
This is the first appearance of Shakespeare's name in the Stationers' Register.

PUBLISHED: 1600 Q. 'As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.'
A 'good' Quarto. In iv. 2. Dogberry is called Kempe, and Verges is called Cowley. Will Kempe and Richard Cowley were both actors in Shakespeare's company.
1623 F1. set up from a copy of Q that had been used as a prompt-copy: instead of the 'Enter Musicke' of Q, F prints 'Enter Iacke Wilson', the singer.

MERES: Not mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, though he mentions *Loue labours wonne* which some consider to be *Much Ado*, though it is more probably *The Taming of the Shrew*.

SOURCES: The Claudio-Hero plot occurs in a novella by Bandello, translated by Belleforest in his *Histoires Tragiques*; in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, translated by Sir John Harington, and in the

Faerie Queene ii. 4. The Beatrice-Benedick plot is Shakespeare's own, as is Dogberry-Verges. According to Aubrey (c. 1681) 'The Humour of the Constable in a Midsomernight's Dreame [Much Ado], he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks which is the roade from London to Stratford'.

In 1662 D'Avenant combined *Measure for Measure* and the Beatrice-Benedick theme of *Much Ado* in his blank verse adaptation *The Law Against Lovers*. Benedick was one of Garrick's favourite parts. He first played it at Drury Lane in 1748, and for the last time in 1776.

LEONARD DIGGES.

let but Beatrice
And Benedicke be seene, loe in a trice
The Cockpit Galleries, Boxes, all are full.
Commendatory Verses to Shakespeare's Poems, 1640.

PEPYS. I went to the Opera, and saw 'The Law against Lovers', a good play and well performed, especially the little girl's, whom I never saw act before, dancing and singing; and were it not for her, the losse of Roxalana would spoil the house.[1]

Diary, Feb. 18th, 1662.

CHARLES GILDON. This Fable is as full of Absurdities, as the Writing is full of Beauties: The first I leave to the Reader to find out by the Rules I have laid down; the second I shall endeavour to shew, and point out some few of the many that are contain'd in the Play. *Shakespear* indeed had the misfortune, which other of our poets have since had, of laying his scene in a warm Climate, where the Manners of the People are very different from ours; and yet has made them talk and act generally like Men of a colder Country. . . .

This Play we must call a Comedy, tho some of the Incidents, and Discources too, are more in a Tragick Strain: and that of the Accusation of *Hero* is too shocking for either Tragedy or Comedy; nor cou'd it have come off in Nature, if we regard the Country, without the Death of more than *Hero*. . . . Besides which, there is such a pleasing Variety of Characters in the Play, and those perfectly maintain'd, as well as distinguish'd, that you lose the Absurdities of the Conduct in the Excellence of the Manners, Sentiments, Diction, and Topicks. *Benedict* and *Beatrice* are two sprightly, witty, talkative Characters; and tho of the same nature, yet perfectly distinguished; and you have no need to read the Names to know who speaks. . . .

To quote all the Comick Excellencies of this Play would be to transcribe three parts of it. For all that passes betwixt *Benedict* and *Beatrice* is admirable. . . . Nay, the variety and natural Distinction of the vulgar Humours of this Play, are remarkable.

[1] 'The little girl' and 'Roxalana' (Elisabeth Davenport) are representative of the actresses now for the first time appearing on the public stage.

The Scenes of this Play are something obscure; for you can scarce tell where the Place is in the two first Acts, tho the Scenes in them seem pretty entire, and unbroken. But those are things that we ought not to look much for in *Shakespear*. Yet whilst he is out in the Dramatick Imitation of the Fable, he always draws Men and Women so perfectly, that when we read, we can scarce persuade ourselves but that the Discourse is real and no Fiction.

An Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage, 1714.

COLERIDGE. The interest of the plot is always in fact on account of the characters, not *vice versa*, as in almost all other writers; the plot is a mere canvass and no more. Hence arises the true justification of the same stratagem being used in regard to Benedict and Beatrice,—the vanity in each being alike. Take away from the Much Ado About Nothing all that which is not indispensable to the plot, either as having little to do with it, or, at best, like Dogberry and his comrades, forced into the service, when any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action;—take away Benedict, Beatrice, Dogberry, and the reaction of the former on the character of Hero,—and what will remain? In other writers the main agent of the plot is always the prominent character; in Shakespeare it is so, or is not so, as the character is in itself calculated, or not calculated, to form the plot. Don John is the main-spring of the plot of this play; but he is merely shown and then withdrawn.

HAZLITT. This admirable comedy used to be frequently acted till of late years. Mr. Garrick's Benedick was one of his most celebrated characters; and Mrs. Jordan, we have understood, played Beatrice very delightfully. The serious part is still the most prominent here, as in other instances that we have noticed. Hero is the principal figure in the piece, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind by her beauty, her tenderness, and the hard trial of her love. . . .

The principal comic characters in Much Ado About Nothing, Benedick and Beatrice, are both essences in their kind. His character as a woman-hater is admirably supported, and his conversion to matrimony is no less happily effected by the pretended story of Beatrice's love for him. . . .

Perhaps that middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender, and our follies, turning round against themselves in support of our affections, retain nothing but their humanity.

Dogberry and Verges in this play are inimitable specimens of quaint blundering and misprisions of meaning; and are a standing record of that formal gravity of pretension and total want of common understanding, which Shakespear no doubt copied from real life, and which in the course of two hundred years appear to have ascended from the lowest to the highest offices in the state.

J. DOVER WILSON. The manuscript, then, which Sims and his compositors handled in 1600 was, we hold, an old play which had been worked over and recast somewhere towards the end of 1598 or the

beginning of 1599. . . . The 'old play', therefore, as far as the internal evidence takes us, was an early play by Shakespeare himself.

Once the fact of revision is established, it is possible to frame a theory, which we may claim to be at least plausible, as to the general lines on which Shakespeare carried it out. We may premise at the outset, without fear of contradiction, that the characters which would interest him most in 1598-9 would be Beatrice and Benedick, and, secondly, that economical as ever of his energies and his material he would be likely to retain as much of the old version as he conveniently could. In his desire to bring Beatrice and Benedick more into the foreground of the picture, he would be obliged, we must suppose, to re-write and greatly to expand their 'parts', especially when they were present together on the stage. This meant a corresponding curtailment in other sections of the play, which must be kept more or less within its original proportions; but while there would be abridgment and compression Shakespeare would avoid more re-writing in these sections than was absolutely necessary. Further, since three-quarters of the received text is in prose and the verse-scenes are almost entirely concerned with the Hero and Claudio plot, we infer that the 1598-9 revision was a prose one and that the verse belongs to the old play. This inference is supported by the distinction between the prose and verse as regards punctuation, which we have noted above. It finds support also in the style of the verse, which so far from resembling what we should expect Shakespeare to be writing at the very end of the century is all strongly reminiscent of *The Two Gentlemen* and *Romeo and Juliet*, as we shall point out in detail in our notes. Moreover there are many indications that the verse-scenes have been abridged; for they contain not only many broken lines of verse but also those imperfectly deleted passages which we have previously dealt with. But a consideration of the plot will perhaps furnish us with the most interesting and conclusive evidence of the way in which the revision was carried out. . . .

The Copy for Much Ado About Nothing.

AS YOU LIKE IT

WRITTEN: 1600.

PERFORMED: 1603. There is evidence that *As You Like It* may have been the play acted at Court, Dec. 2 1603.

S.R.: 1600. '4 Augusti. As you like yt, a booke, to be staid.' Possibly an attempt by the Chamberlain's Men to prevent piratical publication.
1623. 8 November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A fair text.

SOURCES: Thomas Lodge's prose novel, *Rosalynde, or Euphues' Golden Legacy*, based on the 14th century *Tale of Gamelyn*.

JOHNSON. Of this play the fable is wild and pleasing. I know not how the ladies will approve the facility with which both Rosalind and Celia give away their hearts. To Celia much may be forgiven for the heroism of her friendship. The character of Jaques is natural and well preserved. The comic dialogue is very sprightly, with less mixture of low buffoonery than in some other plays; and the graver part is elegant and harmonious. By hastening to the end of his work, Shakespeare suppressed the dialogue between the usurper and the hermit, and lost an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson, in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers.

EDWARD CAPELL. A traditional story was current some years ago about Stratford,—that a very old man of that place,—of weak intellects, but yet related to Shakespeare,—being ask'd by some of his neighbours, what he remember'd about him; answer'd,—that he saw him once brought on the stage, upon another man's back; which answer was apply'd by the hearers, to his having seen him perform in this scene the part of Adam: That he should have done so, is made not unlikely by another constant tradition,—that he was no extraordinary actor, and therefore took no parts upon him but such as this: for which he might also be peculiarly fitted by an accidental lameness, which,—as he himself tells us twice in his 'Sonnets', v. 37, and 89,—befell him in some part of life; without saying how, or when, of what sort, or in what degree; but his expressions seem to indicate—latterly.

Commentary, 1774.

HAZLITT. Shakespear has here converted the forest of Arden into another Arcadia, where they 'fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world'. If is the most ideal of any of this author's plays. It is a pastoral drama, in which the interest arises more out of the sentiments and characters than out of the actions or situations. It is not what is done, but what is said, that claims our attention. Nursed in solitude, 'under the shade of melancholy boughs', the imagination grows soft and delicate, and the wit runs riot in idleness, like a spoiled child, that is never sent to school. Caprice and fancy reign and revel here, and stern necessity is banished to the court. The mild sentiments of humanity are strengthened with thought and leisure; the echo of the cares and noise of the world strikes upon the ear of those 'who have felt them knowingly', softened by time and distance. 'They hear the tumult and are still.' The very air of the place seems to breathe a spirit of philosophical poetry: to stir the thoughts, to touch the heart with pity, as the drowsy forest rustles to the sighing gale. Never was there such beautiful moralising, equally free from pedantry or petulance.

Jaques is the only purely contemplative character in Shakespear. He thinks, and does nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he is

totally regardless of his body and his fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers; his only passion is thought; he sets no value upon anything but as it serves as food for reflection. . . . He resents Orlando's passion for Rosalind as some disparagement of his own passion for abstract truth.

EDWARD DOWDEN. Jacques died, we know not how, or when, or where; but he came to life again a century later, and appeared in the world as an English clergyman; we need stand in no doubt as to his character, for we all know him under his later name of Lawrence Sterne. Mr Yorick made a mistake about his family tree; he came not out of the play of Hamlet, but out of As You Like It. In Arden he wept and moralised over the wounded deer; and at Namport his tears and sentiment gushed forth for the dead donkey. . . .

Upon the whole, As You Like It is the sweetest and happiest of all Shakspere's comedies. No one suffers; no one lives an eager intense life; there is no tragic interest in it as there is in the Merchant of Venice, as there is in Much Ado about Nothing. It is mirthful, but the mirth is sprightly, graceful, exquisite; there is none of the rollicking fun of Sir Toby here; the songs are not 'coziers' catches' shouted in the night time, 'without any mitigation or remorse of voice', but the solos and duets of pages in the wild-wood, or the noisier chorus of foresters. The wit of Touchstone is not mere clownage, nor has it any indirect serious significances; it is a dainty kind of absurdity worthy to hold comparison with the melancholy of Jacques. And Orlando in the beauty and strength of early manhood, and Rosalind,

> A gallant curtle-axe upon her thigh,
> A boar-spear in her hand,

and the bright, tender, loyal womanhood within—are figures which quicken and restore our spirits, as music does, which is neither noisy nor superficial, and yet which knows little of the deep passion and sorrow of the world.

Shakspere, when he wrote this idyllic play, was himself in his forest of Arden. He had ended one great ambition—the historical plays—and not yet commenced his tragedies. It was a resting-place. He sends his imagination into the woods to find repose. Instead of the court and camps of England, and the embattled plains of France, here was this woodland scene, where the palm-tree, the lioness, and the serpent are to be found; possessed of a flora and fauna that flourish in spite of physical geographers. There is an open-air feeling throughout the play. The dialogue, as has been observed, catches freedom and freshness from the atmosphere. 'Never is the scene within-doors except when something discordant is introduced to heighten as it were the harmony.' After the trumpet-tones of Henry V comes the sweet pastoral strain, so bright, so tender. Must it not be all in keeping? Shakspere was not trying to control his melancholy. When he needed to do that, Shakspere confronted his melancholy very passionately, and looked it full in the face. Here he needed refreshment, a sunlight tempered by forest-boughs, a breeze upon his forehead, a stream murmuring in his ears.

Shakspere, His Mind and Art.

TWELFTH NIGHT

WRITTEN: 1600.

PERFORMED: 1602 Feb. 2nd, in the Middle Temple.
1618. 'To John Hemminges ... for presenting two severall Playes before his Maiesty, on Easter Monday Twelfte night the play soe called and on Easter Tuesday the Winter's Tale xx[li].' (*Chamber Account.*)
1623 Feb. 2nd. 'At Candlemas Malvolio was acted at court, by the kings servants.'

S.R.: 1623. 8 November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A good text: possibly set up from a prompt-copy.

SOURCES: The Orsino-Olivia-Viola-Sebastian plot from *Gl'Ingannati* (1531), author unknown; Bandello's *Novella*; Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*; Barnabe Riche's *Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581). The sub-plot and its characters are Shakespeare's creation.

In 1703 William Burnaby vulgarised *Twelfth Night* in his *Love Betray'd.*

JOHN MANNINGHAM. At our feast wee had a play called 'Twelue Night, or What You Will', much like the Commedy of Errores, or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called *Inganni.* A good practise in it to make the Steward beleeve his Lady widdowe was in love with him, by counterfeyting a letter as from his Lady in generall termes, telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparaile, &c., and then when he came to practise making him beleeue they tooke him to be mad.

Diary, Feb. 2, 1602.

LEONARD DIGGES.

Loe in a trice
The Cockpit Galleries, Boxes, all are full.
To heare Maluoglio that crosse garter'd Gull.

1640.

PEPYS. Observed at the Opera a new play, 'Twelfth Night', was acted there, and the King there: so I, against my own mind and resolution, could not forbear to go in, which did make the play seem a burthen to me; and I took no pleasure at all in it. (*Sept.* 11, 1661.)

To the Duke's house, and there saw Twelfth-Night acted well, though it be but a silly play, and not relating at all to the name or day. (*Jan.* 6, 1663.)

To the Duke of York's house, and saw 'Twelfth Night', as it is now revived, but, I think, one of the weakest plays that ever I saw on the stage. (*Jan.* 20, 1669).

JOHNSON. This play is, in the graver part, elegant and easy, and, in some of the lighter scenes, exquisitely humorous. Aguecheek is drawn with great propriety, but his character is, in a great measure, that of natural fatuity, and is, therefore, not the proper prey of a satirist. The soliloquy of Malvolio is truly comic; he is betrayed to ridicule merely by his pride. The marriage of Olivia, and the succeeding perplexity, though well enough contrived to divert in the stage, wants credibility, and fails to produce the proper instruction required in the drama, as it exhibits no just picture of life.

LAMB. Malvolio is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. . . . But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride, or his gravity, (call it what you will,) is inherent, and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latterly only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty, a little above his station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished. . . . His dialect on all occasions is that of a gentleman and a man of education. We must not confound him with the eternal old, low steward of comedy. . . . Even in his absurd state of chains and darkness, a sort of greatness seems never to desert him. He argues highly and well with the supposed Sir Topas, and philosophises gallantly upon his straw. There must have been some shadow of worth about the man; he must have been something more than a mere vapour—a thing of straw, or Jack in office—before Fabian and Maria could have ventured sending him upon a courting errand to Olivia. There was some consonancy (as he would say) in the undertaking, or the jest would have been too bold even for that house of misrule.

Bensley, accordingly, threw over the part an air of Spanish loftiness. He looked, spake, and moved like an old Castilian. He was starch, spruce, opinionated, but his superstructure of pride seemed bottomed upon a sense of worth. There was something in it beyond the coxcomb. It was big and swelling, but you could not be sure that it was hollow. You might wish to see it taken down, but you felt that it was upon an elevation. He was magnificent from the outset; but when the decent sobrieties of the character began to give way, and the poison of self-love, in his conceit of the Countess's affection, gradually to work, you would have thought that the hero of La

Mancha in person stood before you. . . . I confess that I never saw the catastrophe of this character, while Bensley played it, without a kind of tragic interest.

On Some of the Old Actors.

HAZLITT. This is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespear's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakespear's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds or poisons, than in leaving a sting behind it. He gives the most amusing exaggeration of the prevailing foibles of his characters, but in a way that they themselves, instead of being offended at, would almost join in to humour; he rather contrives opportunities for them to shew themselves off in the happiest lights, than renders them contemptible in the perverse construction of the wit or malice of others.—There is a certain stage of society in which people become conscious of their peculiarities and absurdities, affect to disguise what they are, and set up pretensions to what they are not. This gives rise to a corresponding style of comedy, the object of which is to detect the disguises of self-love, and to make reprisals on these preposterous assumptions of vanity, by marking the contrast between the real and the affected character as severely as possible, and denying to those, who would impose on us for what they are not, even the merit which they have. This is the comedy of artificial life, of wit and satire, such as we see it in Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, etc. To this succeeds a state of society from which the same sort of affectation and pretence are banished by a greater knowledge of the world or by their successful exposure on the stage; and which by neutralising the materials of comic character, both natural and artificial, leaves no comedy at all—but *the sentimental*. Such is our modern comedy. There is a period in the progress of manners anterior to both these, in which the foibles and follies of individuals are of nature's planting, not the growth of art or study; in which they are therefore unconscious of them themselves, or care not who knows them, if they can but have their whim out; and in which, as there is no attempt at imposition, the spectators rather receive pleasure from humouring the inclinations of the persons they laugh at, than wish to give them pain by exposing their absurdity. This may be called the comedy of nature, and it is the comedy which we generally find in Shakespear.—Whether the analysis here given be just or not, the spirit of his comedies is evidently quite distinct from that of the authors above mentioned, as it is in its essence the same with that of Cervantes, and also very frequently of Molière, though he was more systematic in his extravagance than Shakespear. Shakespear's comedy is of a pastoral and poetical cast. Folly is indigenous to the soil, and shoots out with native, happy, unchecked, luxuriance. Absurdity has every encouragement afforded it; and nonsense has room to flourish in. Nothing is stunted by the churlish, icy hand of in-

difference or severity. The poet runs riot in a conceit, and idolises a quibble. His whole object is to turn the meanest or rudest objects to a pleasurable account. The relish which he has of a pun, or of the quaint humour of a low character, does not interfere with the delight with which he describes a beautiful image, or the most refined love. . . .

In a word, the best turn is given to everything, instead of the worst. There is a constant infusion of the romantic and enthusiastic, in proportion as the characters are natural and sincere; whereas in the more artificial style of comedy, everything gives way to ridicule and indifference, there being nothing left but affectation on one side, and incredulity on the other.—Much as we like Shakespear's comedies, we cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that they are better than his tragedies; nor do we like them half so well. If his inclination to comedy sometimes led him to trifle with the seriousness of tragedy, the poetical and impassioned passages are the best parts of his comedies. The great and secret charm of *Twelfth Night* is the character of Viola. Much as we like catches and cakes and ale, there is something that we like better. We have a friendship for Sir Toby; we patronise Sir Andrew; we have an understanding with the Clown, a sneaking kindness for Maria and her rogueries; we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathise with his gravity, his smiles, his cross garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment in the stocks. But there is something that excites in us a stronger feeling than all this—it is Viola's confession of her love.

SIR EDMUND CHAMBERS. Thus we are left with the exquisite pendants of *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, two plays whose common serenity of golden temper is indeed only a reflex of their single intention. The parallels between them are easy to draw. The ordered gardens of the Boccaccio-like villa in Illyria and the pastoral glades of the forest of Arden serve equally well for images of that civilized and sheltered society wherein alone, according to Meredith, comedy obtains its real scope; and each lends an appropriate setting to those wilful departures from the way of right reason which it is the proper and special mission of comedy to correct. The plays are as physicians set to heal kindred ailments of an idle brain; the affectations of the fields here and there of the town. *As You Like It* is the comedy of the romantics, of the imagination which runs away with the facts of life and frames impossible ideals on the extravagant assumption that human nature in a forest is something wholly different from human nature in a court. *Twelfth Night* in its turn is the comedy of the sentimentalists, of the tendency of minds pent in the artificial atmosphere of cities to a spiritual self-deception, whereby they indulge in the expression of emotions not because they really have them, but because they have come to be regarded by themselves or others as modish or delightful emotions to have.

Shakespeare: A Survey.

JULIUS CÆSAR

WRITTEN: 1599-1601.

PERFORMED: 1599, Sept. 21st. Thomas Platter saw a play of *Julius Cæsar*, though not necessarily Shakespeare's.
1613. One of the plays—'Cæsars Tragedy'—acted at the 'Magnificent Marriage' of the Count Palatine to the Lady Elizabeth.
1636, Jan 31st, at 'St. James'.
1639, Nov. 13th, at 'the Cocpit'.

S.R.: 1623. 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A very good text. In IV. 3, Brutus's account of Portia's death may be revision, the later report by Messala the undeleted original version.

SOURCE: Plutarch's *Lives* of Brutus, Cæsar, and Antony, translated by Sir Thomas North (1579) from the French of Jacques Amyot (1559).

The play is much attacked by the disintegrators, being partly attributed to Marlowe, Chapman, Drayton, Dekker, Webster, etc.

THOMAS PLATTER. Den 21 Septembris nach dem Imbissessen, etwan umb zwey vhren, bin ich mitt meiner geselschaft über daz wasser gefahren, haben in dem streüwinen Dachhaus die Tragedy vom ersten Keyser Julio Cæsare mitt ohngefahr 15 personen sehen gar artlich agieren; zu endt der Comedien dantzeten sie ihrem gebraucht nach gar überausz zierlich, ye zwen in mannes vndt 2 in weiber kleideren angethan, wunderbahrlich mitt einanderen.

1599.

JOHN WEEVER.

The many-headed multitude were drawne
By *Brutus* speach, that *Cæsar* was ambitious,
When eloquent *Mark Antonie* had showne
His vertues, who but *Brutus* then was vicious?

The Mirror of Martyrs, 1601.

BEN JONSON. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him;

Cæsar thou dost me wrong. Hee replyed: *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause* and such like: which were ridiculous.

Discoveries, 1623-37.

LEONARD DIGGES.

So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,
And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were,
Brutus and *Cassius*: oh how the Audience,
Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence,
When some new day they would not brooke a line,
Of tedious (though well laboured) *Catilines*.

1640.

DRYDEN:

Our author, by experience, finds it true,
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you . . .
And to confess a truth, though out of time,
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And nature flies him like enchanted ground:
What verse can do, he has perform'd in this,
Which he presumes the most correct of his;
But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
Invades his breast at Shakspeare's sacred name:
Awed when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
And to an age less polish'd, more unskill'd,
Does, with disdain, the foremost honours yield.

Prologue to 'Aurengzebe', 1676.

RYMER. In the former Play (*Othello*), our Poet might be the bolder, the persons being all his own Creatures, and meer fiction. But here he sins not against Nature and Philosophy only, but against the most known History, and the memory of the Noblest Romans, that ought to be sacred to all Posterity. He might be familiar with *Othello* and *Jago*, as his own natural acquaintance: but *Cæsar* and *Brutus* were above his conversation. To put them in Fools Coats, and make them Jack-puddens in the *Shakespear* dress, is a *Sacriledge*, beyond anything in *Spelman*. The truth is, this authors head was full of villainous, unnatural images, and history has only furnish'd him with great names, thereby to recommend them to the World, by writing over them, *This is* Brutus; *this is* Cicero; *this is* Cæsar. . . .

For, indeed, that Language which *Shakespear* puts in the Mouth of *Brutus* wou'd not suit, or be convenient, unless from some son of the Shambles, or some natural offspring of the Butchery. But never any Poet so boldly and so barefac'd flounced along from contradiction to contradiction. . . .

This may shew with what indignity our Poet treats the noblest *Romans* But there is no other cloth in this Wardrobe. Every one must be content to wear a Fools Coat, who comes to be dressed by him.

A Short View of Tragedy, 1693.

JOHNSON. Of this tragedy many particular passages deserve regard, and the contention and reconcilement of Brutus and Cassius is universally celebrated; but I have never been strongly agitated in perusing it, and think it somewhat cold and unaffecting, compared with some other of Shakespeare's plays; his adherence to the real story, and to Roman manners, seems to have impeded the natural vigour of his genius.

COLERIDGE. I know no part of Shakspeare that more impresses on me the belief of his genius being superhuman, than this scene between Brutus and Cassius. In the Gnostic heresy it might have been credited with less absurdity than most of their dogmas, that the Supreme had employed him to create, previously to his function of representing, characters.

HAZLITT. *Julius Cæsar* is not equal as a whole, to either of his other plays taken from the Roman history. It is inferior in interest to *Coriolanus*, and both in interest and power to *Antony and Cleopatra*. It however abounds in admirable and affecting passages, and is remarkable for the profound knowledge of character, in which Shakespear could scarcely fail. If there is any exception to this remark, it is in the hero of the piece himself. We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Cæsar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in the Commentaries. He makes several vapouring and rather pedantic speeches, and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do. So far, the fault of the character is the fault of the plot. . . .

Shakespear has in this play and elsewhere shown the same penetration into political character and the springs of public events as into those of every-day life. For instance, the whole design of the conspirators to liberate their country fails from the generous temper and over-weening confidence of Brutus in the goodness of their cause and the assistance of others. Thus it has always been. Those who mean well themselves think well of others, and fall a prey to their security. That humanity and honesty which dispose men to resist injustice and tyranny render them unfit to cope with the cunning and power of those who are opposed to them . . . Cassius was better cut out for a conspirator. His heart prompted his head. His watchful jealousy made him fear the worst that might happen, and his irritability of temper added to his inveteracy of purpose, and sharpened his patriotism. The mixed nature of his motives made him fitter to contend with bad men.

SIR E. K. CHAMBERS. These conflicting theories [about the authorship of *Julius Cæsar*] may perhaps be left to cancel each other out. I believe them to be all equally misconceived, and to rest partly upon

characteristic Shakespearean inconsistencies in the handling of detail, and partly upon the special features of the play. One is that, while Shakespeare's later tragedies move in a single curve to a catastrophe in the death of the title-character, the action of *Julius Cæsar* has two peaks, one in the Capitol and the other at Philippi, and the psychological interest is at least as much in Brutus as in Cæsar. The effect of a double theme is therefore given. The other is that Shakespeare is deliberately experimenting in a classical manner, with an extreme simplicity both of vocabulary and of phrasing. This has already been noted by Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 85. It is often admirably telling, but sometimes it leads to a stiffness, perhaps even a baldness, of diction, which may awake reminiscences of pre-Shakespearean plays. I do not see any special resemblance to Marlowe; the constant use of mid-line speech endings and mid-line pauses is not pre-Shakespearean at all. As for Beaumont, it is merely a matter of verbal parallels, and the derivation of Beaumont's diction from Shakespeare's has long been recognized. The element of simple dignity in the style of *Julius Cæsar*, although we have no particular reason to suppose that he knew it otherwise than upon the stage, seems to have made a special appeal to him.

William Shakespeare.

HAMLET

WRITTEN: 1601.

PERFORMED: 1602, July; it had then been 'latelie Acted'.
1607, acted on board Captain Keeling's East Indiaman.
1608, 'I [Keeling] envited Captain Hawkins to a ffishe dinner and had Hamlet acted abord me: which I permitt to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawful games, or sleepe.'
1619-20, at Court.
1637, at Hampton Court, 24 January, 'before the kinge and Queene'.

S.R.: 1602 'xxvj^{to} Julij. James Robertes. Entred for his Copie . . . A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes'.
1607 Nov. 19. Transferred from Nicholas Ling to John Smethwick.

PUBLISHED: 1603 Q1. 'The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and

else-where.' A 'bad' Quarto, less than half the length of Q2. A reported text, possibly by the actor who played Marcellus in performances based on the transcript underlying F1.

1604 Q2. 'Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.' The longest version, possibly set up from the original MS. 85 lines which appear in F1 were omitted probably in deference to Anne of Denmark, the Queen.

1611 Q3, set up from Q2; Q4 (undated) from Q3; Q5 (1637) from Q4.

1623 F1. Probably set up from a transcript of the Q2 MS, which had been used as a prompt-copy. It is 200 lines shorter than Q2, probably owing to cuts.

SOURCES: Belleforest's French version in his *Histoires Tragiques* (1576) of the *Historiæ Danicæ* of Saxo Grammaticus. There was an old play of Hamlet, now lost, acted in 1594, which may have been written by Kyd and used by Shakespeare.

In 1772 Garrick refined *Hamlet* in a version that was never printed, omitting the grave-diggers and making his own part still larger.

PHILIP HENSLOWE. In the name of god Amen begininge at Newington my Lord Admeralle men & my Lorde Chamberlen men As ffolowethe 1594.

June 3.		Heaster & Asheweros	viij^{s}.
4.		the Jewe of Malta	x^{s}.
5.		Andronicous	xij^{s}.
6.		Cutlacke	xj^{s}.
8.	ne	Bellendon	xvij^{s}.
9.		Hamlet	viij^{s}.
10.		Heaster	v^{s}.
11.		the Tamynge of A Shrowe	ix^{s}.
12.		Andronicous	vij^{s}.
13.		the Jewe	iiij^{s}.

(This reference by Henslowe in his *Diary* to a performance of *Hamlet* refers to the lost play, or *Ur-Hamlet*, which may have been written by Kyd. The disintegrators maintain that Q1 is a version of this play revised by Shakespeare, and that even in Q2 fragments of the old *Hamlet* are incorporated and account for certain dramatic difficulties.)

GABRIEL HARVEY. The younger sort takes much delight in Shakespeares Venus, & Adonis: but his Lucrece, & his tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, haue it in them, to please the wiser sort.

Marginalia, 1598-1601.

ANTHONY SCOLOKER. It should be like the *Neuer-too-well read Arcadia*, where the *Prose* and *Verce* (*Matter* and *Words*) are like his *Mistresses* eyes, one still excelling another and without Coriuall: or to come home to the vulgars *Element*, like *Friendly Shakespeare's Tragedies*, where the *Commedian* rides, when the *Tragedian* stands on Tip-toe: Faith it should please all, like Prince *Hamlet*. But in sadnesse, then it were to be feared he would runne mad.

Epistle to Daiphantus, 1604.

PEPYS. To the Opera, and there saw 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke', done with scenes very well, but above all, Betterton did the Prince's part beyond imagination. (24 *August* 1661.)

To the Theatre, and there saw 'Hamlett' very well done. (27 *Nov.* 1661.)

By water to the Royal Theatre; but that was so full they told us we could have no room. And so to the Duke's house; and there saw 'Hamlett' done, giving us fresh reason never to think enough of Betterton. Who should we see come upon the stage but Gosnell, my wife's maid, but neither spoke, danced, nor sung; which I was sorry for. (28 *May* 1663.)

With my wife within doors, and getting a speech out of Hamlett, 'to bee or not to bee', without book. (*Nov.* 13, *Lord's Day*, 1664.)

To the Duke of York's playhouse, and saw 'Hamlet'. which we have not seen this year before, or more; and mightily pleased with it, but, above all, with Betterton, the best part, I believe, that ever man acted. (30 *August* 1668.)

CHARLES GILDON. I have been told that he writ the scene of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, at his House which bordered on the Charnel-House and Church-Yard.

Lives and Characters, 1698.

JOHN DOWNES. The Tragedy of *Hamlet*; *Hamlet* being Perform'd by Mr. *Betterton*, Sir *William* [Davenant] (having seen Mr. *Taylor* of the *Black-Fryars* Company Act it, who being Instructed by the Author Mr. *Shaksepeur*) taught Mr *Betterton* in every Particle.

Roscius Anglicanus, 1708.

NICHOLAS ROWE. His admirable Wit, and the natural Turn of it to the Stage, soon distinguish'd him, if not as an extraordinary Actor, yet as an excellent Writer. His Name is Printed, as the Custom was in those Times, amongst those of the other Players, before some old Plays, but without any particular Account of what sort of Parts he us'd to play; and tho' I have inquir'd, I could never meet with any further Account of him this way, than that the top of his performance was the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*. . . .

I cannot leave *Hamlet*, without taking notice of the Advantage with which we have seen this Master-piece of *Shakespear* distinguish it self upon the Stage, by Mr *Betterton's* fine Performance of that Part . . . I must own a

particular Obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the Passages relating to his Life, which I have here transmitted to the Publick; his Veneration for the Memory of *Shakespear* having engaged him to make a Journey into *Warwickshire*, on purpose to gather up what Remains he could of a Name for which he had so great a value.

Works of Shakespeare, 1709.

JOHNSON. If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterized, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment, that includes judicious and instructive observations; and solemnity, not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth, the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that, in the first act, chills the blood with horror, to the fop, in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is, perhaps, not wholly secure against objections. The action is, indeed, for the most part, in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole piece, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of the play, convicted the king, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet has no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having shown little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained, but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification, which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young, the beautiful, the harmless, and the pious.

VOLTAIRE. Je suis bien loin assurément de justifier en tout la tragédie d'Hamlet: c'est une pièce grossière et barbare, qui ne serait pas supportée par la plus vile populace de la France et de l'Italie. Hamlet y

devient fou au seconde acte, et sa maîtresse folle au troisième; le prince tue le père de sa maîtresse, feignant de tuer un rat, et l'héroïne se jette dans la rivière. On fait sa fosse sur le théâtre; des fossoyeurs disent des *quolibets* dignes d'eux, en tenant dans leurs mains des têtes de morts; le prince Hamlet répond à leurs grossièretés abominables par des folies non moins dégoûtantes. Pendant ce temps-là, un des acteurs fait la conquête de la Pologne. Hamlet, sa mère, et son beau-père boivent ensemble sur le théâtre; on chante à table, on sy' querelle, on se bat, on se tue: on croirait que cet ouvrage est le fruit de l'imagination d'un sauvage ivre.

Préface de Sémiramis.

MALONE. Oldys, in one of his manuscripts, says that Shakspeare received but *five pounds* for his *Hamlet*; whether from the players who first acted it, or the printer or bookseller who first published it, is not distinguished.

Supplementary Observations.

GOETHE. Figure to yourselves this youth, this son of princes; conceive him vividly, bring his state before your eyes, and then observe him when he learns that his father's spirit walks; stand by him in the terrors of the night, when the venerable ghost itself appears before him. A horrid shudder passes over him; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows it, and hears. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears; the summons to revenge, and the piercing oft-repeated prayer, Remember me!

And when the ghost has vanished, who is it that stands before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A prince by birth, rejoicing to be called to punish the usurper of his crown? No! trouble and astonishment take hold of the solitary young man: he grows bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the spirit, and concludes with the significant ejaculation:

> The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!

In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakespeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view the whole piece seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom; the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

A lovely, pure, noble and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him; the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him; not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds, and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts; yet still without recovering his peace of mind.[1]

Wilhelm Meister, 1795.

[1] See also p. 299.

COLERIDGE. The seeming inconsistencies in the conduct and character of Hamlet have long exercised the conjectural ingenuity of critics; and, as we are always loth to suppose that the cause of defective apprehension is in ourselves, the mystery has been too commonly explained by the very easy process of setting it down as in fact inexplicable, and by resolving the phenomenon into a misgrowth or *lusus* of the capricious and irregular genius of Shakspeare. The shallow and stupid arrogance of these vulgar and indolent decisions I would fain do my best to expose. I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakspeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. Indeed, that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of our nature may be assumed from the fact, that Hamlet has been the darling of every country in which the literature of England has been fostered. In order to understand him, it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. Man is distinguished from the brute animals in proportion as thought prevails over sense: but in the healthy processes of the mind, a balance is constantly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect;—for if there be an overbalance in the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. Now one of Shakspeare's modes of creating characters is, to conceive any one intellectual or moral faculty in morbid excess, and then to place himself, Shakspeare, thus mutilated or diseased, under given circumstances. In Hamlet he seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses, and our meditation on the workings of our minds,—an *equilibrium* between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed: his thoughts, and the images of his fancy, are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his very perceptions, instantly passing through the *medium* of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own. Hence we see a great, an almost enormous, intellectual activity, and a proportionate aversion to real action, consequent upon it, with all its symptoms and accompanying qualities. This character Shakspeare places in circumstances, under which it is obliged to act on the spur of the moment:—Hamlet is brave and careless of death, but he vacillates from sensibility, and procrastinates from thought, and loses the power of action in the energy of resolve. Thus it is that this tragedy presents a direct contrast to that of Macbeth; the one proceeds with the utmost slowness, the other with a crowded and breathless rapidity.

LAMB. The character of Hamlet is perhaps that by which, since the days of Betterton, a succession of popular performers have had the greatest ambition to distinguish themselves. The length of the part may be one of their reasons. But for the character itself, we find it in a play, and therefore we judge it a fit subject of dramatic representation. The play itself abounds in maxims and reflections beyond any other, and therefore we consider it as a proper vehicle for conveying moral instruction. But Hamlet himself—

what does he suffer meanwhile by being dragged forth as a public schoolmaster, to give lectures to the crowd! Why, nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense; they are the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth; or rather, they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to words for the sake of the reader, who must else remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once! I say not that it is the fault of the actor so to do; he must pronounce them *ore rotundo*; he must accompany them with his eye; he must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture,—or he fails. *He must be thinking all the while of his appearance, because he knows that all the while the spectators are judging of it.* And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet!

On the Tragedies of Shakspeare.

HAZLITT. Hamlet is a name; his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. . . .

The character of Hamlet stands quite by itself. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility —the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect. . . . At other times, when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided, and sceptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and finds out some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. . . .

He is the prince of philosophical speculators; and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, he declines it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it. Still he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not from any want of attachment to his father or abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the

crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act: and any vague pretext that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes. . . .

We do not like to see our author's plays acted, and least of all, *Hamlet*. There is no play that suffers so much in being transferred to the stage. Hamlet himself seems hardly capable of being acted. Mr. Kemble unavoidably fails in this character from a want of ease and variety. The character of Hamlet is made up of undulating lines; it has the yielding flexibility of 'a wave o' th' sea'. Mr. Kemble plays it like a man in armour, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and refined susceptibility of the character, as the sharp angles and abrupt starts which Mr. Kean introduces into the part. Mr. Kean's Hamlet is as much too splenetic and rash as Mr. Kemble's is too deliberate and formal. His manner is too strong and pointed. He throws a severity, approaching to virulence, into the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in his reflections, and only *thinks aloud*. There should therefore be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by a studied exaggeration of emphasis or manner; no *talking at* his hearers. There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor. A pensive air of sadness should sit reluctantly upon his brows, but no appearance of fixed and sullen gloom. He is full of weakness and melancholy, but there is no harshness in his nature. He is the most amiable of misanthropes.

A. C. Bradley. We come next to what may be called the sentimental view of Hamlet, a view common both among his worshippers and among his defamers. Its germ may perhaps be found in an unfortunate phrase of Goethe's (who of course is not responsible for the whole view): 'a lovely, pure and most moral nature, *without the strength of nerve which forms a hero*, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away.' When this idea is isolated, developed and popularised, we get the picture of a graceful youth, sweet and sensitive, full of delicate sympathies and yearning aspirations, shrinking from the touch of everything gross and earthly; but frail and weak, a kind of Werther, with a face like Shelley's and a voice like Mr. Tree's. And then we ask in tender pity, how could such a man perform the terrible duty laid on him?

How, indeed! And what a foolish Ghost even to suggest such a duty! But this conception, though not without its basis in certain beautiful traits of Hamlet's nature, is utterly untrue. It is too kind to Hamlet on one side, and it is quite unjust to him on another. The 'conscience' theory at any rate leaves Hamlet a great nature which you can admire and even revere. But for the 'sentimental' Hamlet you can feel only pity not unmingled with contempt. Whatever else he is, he is no *hero*.

But consider the text. This shrinking, flower-like youth—how could he possibly have done what we *see* Hamlet do? What likeness to him is there in

the Hamlet who, summoned by the Ghost, bursts from his terrified friends with the cry:

> Unhand me, gentlemen!
> By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me;

the Hamlet who scarcely once speaks to the King without an insult, or to Polonius without a gibe; the Hamlet who storms at Ophelia and speaks daggers to his mother; the Hamlet who, hearing a cry behind the arras, whips out his sword in an instant and runs the eavesdropper through; the Hamlet who sends his 'school-fellows' to their death and never troubles his head about them more; the Hamlet who is the first man to board a pirate ship, and who fights with Laertes in the grave; the Hamlet of the catastrophe, an omnipotent fate, before whom all the court stands helpless, who, as the truth breaks upon him, rushes on the King, drives his foil right through his body, then seizes the poisoned cup and forces it violently between the wretched man's lips, and in the throes of death has force and fire enough to wrest the cup from Horatio's hand ('By heaven, I'll have it!') lest he should drink and die? This man, the Hamlet of the play, is a heroic, terrible figure. He would have been formidable to Othello or Macbeth. If the sentimental Hamlet had crossed him, he would have hurled him from his path with one sweep of his arm.

This view, then, or any view that approaches it, is grossly unjust to Hamlet, and turns tragedy into mere pathos. But on the other side, it is too kind to him. It ignores the hardness and cynicism which were indeed no part of his nature, but yet, in this crisis of his life, are indubitably present and painfully marked. . . .

There remains, finally, that class of view which may be named after Schlegel and Coleridge. According to this, *Hamlet* is the tragedy of reflection. The cause of the hero's delay is irresolution; and the cause of this irresolution is excess of the reflective or speculative habit of mind. . . .

On the whole, the Schlegel-Coleridge theory is the most widely received view of Hamlet's character. . . . Nevertheless this theory fails to satisfy. And it fails not merely in this or that detail, but as a whole. . . . And thus, I must maintain, it degrades Hamlet and travesties the play. For Hamlet, according to all the indications in the text, was not naturally or normally such a man, but rather, I venture to affirm, a man who at any *other* time and in any *other* circumstances than those presented would have been perfectly equal to his task; and it is, in fact, the very cruelty of his fate that the crisis of his life comes on him at the one moment when he cannot meet it, and when his highest gifts, instead of helping him, conspire to paralyse him. . . .

Under conditions of a peculiar kind, Hamlet's reflectiveness certainly might prove dangerous to him, and his genius might even (to exaggerate a little) become his doom. Suppose that violent shock to his moral being of which I spoke;[1] and suppose that under this shock, any possible action being

[1] It was the moral shock of the sudden ghastly disclosure of his mother's true nature, falling on him when his heart was aching with love, and his body doubtless was weakened by sorrow.

denied to him, he began to sink into melancholy; then, no doubt, his imaginative and generalising habit of mind might extend the effects of this shock through his whole being and mental world. And if, the state of melancholy being thus deepened and fixed, a sudden demand for difficult and decisive action in a matter connected with the melancholy arose, this state might well have for one of its symptoms an endless and futile mental dissection of the required deed. And, finally, the futility of this process, and the shame of this delay, would further weaken him and enslave him to his melancholy still more. Thus the speculative habit would be *one* indirect cause of the morbid state which hindered action; and it would also reappear in a degenerate form as one of the *symptoms* of this morbid state.

Shakespearean Tragedy.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

WRITTEN: 1602. (Hotson dates 1598 as *Love's Labour's Won* of Meres.)

PERFORMED: The first S.R. entry and the first issue of Q both state that the play had been acted. The second issue of Q omits this record, and the Epistle expressly says that it is 'a new play, never stal'd with the Stage'. There is no record of a production, though it may have been acted at Court or an Inn of Court.

S.R.: 1603. '7 februarii. Master Robertes. Entered for his copie in full Court holden this day to print when he hath gotten sufficient aucthority for yt, The booke of Troilus and Cresseda as yt is acted by my lord Chamberlens Men vj^{d}.'
1609. '28^{uo} Januarii. Richard Bonion Henry Walleys . . . a booke called the history of Troylus and Cressida.'

PUBLISHED. 1609 Q. (first issue.) 'The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida. As it was acted by the Kings Maiesties seruants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare.'
1609 Q. (second issue.) 'The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid. Written by William Shakespeare.'
An Epistle by the publisher was added to this issue.[1]

[1] A neuer writer, to an euer reader. Newes.

Eternall reader, you haue heere a new play, neuer stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulger, and yet passing full of the palme comicall; for it is a birth of your braine, that neuer under-tooke anything commicall, vainely: And were but the vaine names of commedies changde for the titles of Commodities, or of Playes for Pleas; you should see all those grand censors, that now stile them such vanities, flock to them for the maine grace of their grauities: especially this authors Commedies, that are so fram'd to the life, that they serue for the most common Commentaries, of all the actions of our liues

1623 F1. Set up from Q (which is a good one) and a MS., possibly Shakespeare's original. It is not mentioned in the Catalogue of plays, but seems to have been inserted at the last moment as the first of the Tragedies.

SOURCES: Chaucer: *Troilus and Cressida.*
Caxton: *Recuyel of Troy.*
Chapman: translation of the *Iliad.*

Parts of the play have been variously assigned to other authors: to Dekker and Chettle, who wrote a play called *Troilus and Cressida*, to Chapman, and Marston. But apart from the Epilogue there seems no reason whatever to doubt Shakespeare's authorship, and the authority of the Folio.

Dryden adapted the play in 1679: *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth found too late.*

ANON. *Kempe.* Few of the vniversity men pen plaies well, they smell too much of that writer *Ouid*, and that writer *Metamorphosis*, and talke too much of *Proserpina & Iuppiter.* Why heres our fellow *Shakespeare* puts them all downe, I and *Ben Iohnson* too. O that *Ben Iohnson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought vp *Horace* giuing the Poets a pill, but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath giuen him a purge that made him beray his credit.

The Returne from Parnassus, Part II. (1601?)

('The 'pill' was Jonson's attack on Marston and Dekker in his *Poetaster*, 1601. Some think the uncomplimentary description of Ajax in *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 2, is aimed at Jonson, and is the 'purge' referred to in this anonymous play, *Parnassus.*)

DRYDEN. Yet it must be allowed to the present age, that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible. And of those which we

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shewing such a dexterie, and power of witte, that the most displeased with Playes, are pleasd with his Commedies. And all such dull and heauy-witted worldlings, as were neuer capable of the witte of a Commedie, comming by report of them to his representations, haue found that witte there, that they neuer found in them selues, and have parted better wittied than they came: feeling an edge of witte set vpon them, more then ever they dreamd they had braine to grinde it on. So much and such sauored salt of witte is in his Commedies, that they seeme (for their height of pleasure) to be borne in that sea that brought forth *Venus.* Amongst all there is none more witty than this: And had I time I would comment upon it, though I know it needs not, (for so much as will make you thinke your testerne well bestowd) but for so much worth, as euen poore I know to be stuft in it. It deserues such a labour, as well as the best Commedy in *Terence* or *Plautus.* And beleeue this, that when hee is gone, and his Commedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set vp a new English Inquisition. Take this for a warning, and at the perrill of your pleasures losse, and Iudgements, refuse not, nor like this the lesse, for not being sullied, with the smoaky breath of the multitude; but thanke fortune for the scape it hath made amongst you. Since by the grand possessors wills I beleeue you should have prayd for them rather than been prayd. And so I leaue all such to bee prayd for (for the states of their healths) that will not praise it. Vale.

The Publisher's *Epistle* in the second issue of the Quarto, 1609.

understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure. 'Tis true, that in his latter plays he had worn off somewhat of the rust; but the tragedy which I have undertaken to correct was in all probability one of his first endeavours on the stage. . . .

Shakespeare (as I hinted), in the apprenticeship of his writing, modelled it into that play, which is now called by the name of *Troilus and Cressida*, but so lamely is it left to us, that it is not divided into acts; which fault I ascribe to the actors who printed it after Shakespeare's death; and that too so carelessly, that a more uncorrect copy I never saw. For the play itself, the author seems to have begun it with some fire; the characters of Pandarus and Thersites are promising enough; but as if he grew weary of his task, after an entrance or two, he lets them fall: and the latter part of the tragedy is nothing but a confusion of drums and trumpets, excursions and alarms. The chief persons, who give name to the tragedy, are left alive; Cressida is false, and is not punished. Yet, after all, because the play was Shakespeare's, and that there appeared in some places of it the admirable genius of the author, I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried. Accordingly I new-modelled the plot, threw out many unnecessary persons, improved those characters which were begun and left unfinished, as Hector, Troilus, Pandarus, and Thersites, and added that of Andromache. . . .

I will not wear my reader with the scenes which are added of Pandarus and the lovers in the third act, and those of Thersites, which are wholly altered; but I cannot omit the last scene in it, which is almost half the act, betwixt Troilus and Hector. The occasion of raising it was hinted to me by Mr. Betterton; the contrivance and working of it was my own. They who think to do me an injury by saying that it is an imitation of the scene betwixt Brutus and Cassius, do me an honour by supposing I could imitate the incomparable Shakespeare.

Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, 1679.

See, my loved Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
An awful ghost, confess'd to human eyes!
Unnamed, methinks, distinguish'd I had been
From other shades, by this eternal green,
About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
And with a touch their wither'd bays revive.
Untaught, unpractised in a barbarous age,
I found not, but created first the stage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely,
Like fruitful Britain, rich without supply.
In this my rough-drawn play you shall behold

Some master-strokes, so manly and so bold,
That he who meant to alter, found 'em such,
He shook, and thought it sacrilege to touch.

Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*. Spoken by Mr. Betterton, representing the Ghost of Shakespeare.

JOHNSON. This play is more correctly written than most of Shakespeare's compositions, but it is not one of those in which either the extent of his views or elevation of his fancy is fully displayed. As the story abounded with materials, he has exerted little invention; but he has diversified his characters with great variety, and preserved them with great exactness. His vicious characters sometimes disgust, but cannot corrupt, for both Cressida and Pandarus are detested and contemned. The comic characters seem to have been the favourites of the writer; they are of the superficial kind, and exhibit more of manners than nature; but they are copiously filled and powerfully impressed.

COLERIDGE. Indeed, there is no one of Shakespeare's plays harder to characterise. The name and remembrances connected with it, prepare us for the representation of attachment no less faithful than fervent on the side of the youth, and of sudden and shameless inconstancy on the part of the lady. And this is, indeed, as the gold thread on which the scenes are strung, though often kept out of sight and out of mind by gems of greater value than itself. But as Shakespeare calls forth nothing from the mausoleum of history, or the catacombs of tradition, without giving, or eliciting, some permanent and general interest, and brings forward no subject which he does not moralise or intellectualise,—so here he has drawn in Cressida the portrait of a vehement passion, that, having its true origin and proper cause in warmth of temperament, fastens on, rather than fixes to, some one object by liking and temporary preference.

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks: her wanton spirits look out
At every joint and motive of her body.

This Shakespeare has contrasted with the profound affection represented in Troilus, and alone worthy the name of love; but still having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice, and which gives permanence to its own act by converting it into faith and duty. Hence with excellent judgment, and with an excellence higher than mere judgment can give, at the close of the play, when Cressida has sunk into infamy below retrieval and beneath hope, the same will, which had been the substance and the basis of his love, while the restless pleasures and passionate longings, like sea-waves, had tossed but on its surface,—this same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighbourhood with her dishonour, from all lingering fondness and languishing regrets, whilst it

rushes with him into other and nobler duties, and deepens the channel, which his heroic brother's death had left empty for its collected flood. . . .

To all this, however, so little comparative projection is given,—nay, the masterly group of Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses, and, still more in advance, that of Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, so manifestly occupy the foreground, that the subservience and vassalage of strength and animal courage to intellect and policy seems to be the lesson most often in our poet's view, and which he has taken little pains to connect with the former more interesting moral impersonated in the titular hero and heroine of the drama. . . .

The character of Thersites, in particular, well deserves a more careful examination, as the Caliban of demagogic life;—the admirable portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary impulse;—just wise enough to detect the weak head, and fool enough to provoke the armed fist of his betters.

HAZLITT. This is one of the most loose and desultory of our author's plays: it rambles on just as it happens, but it overtakes, together with some indifferent matter, a prodigious number of fine things in its way. Troilus himself is no character: he is merely a common lover: but Cressida and her uncle Pandarus are hit off with proverbial truth. By the speeches given to the leaders of the Grecian host, Shakespear seems to have known them as well as if he had been a spy sent by the Trojans into the enemy's camp—to say nothing of their affording very lofty examples of didactic eloquence. . . .

It cannot be said of Shakespear, as was said of some one, that he was 'without o'erflowing full'. He was full, even to o'erflowing. He gave heaped measure, running over. This was his greatest fault.

CAROLINE SPURGEON. *Troilus* and *Hamlet* are very closely connected in their imagery. Did we not know it for other reasons we could be sure from the similarity and continuity of symbolism in the two plays that they were written near together, and at a time when the author was suffering from a disillusionment, revulsion, and perturbation of nature, such as we feel nowhere else with the same intensity.

The same two groups of images run through and dominate both plays, disease and food; in *Hamlet* the first is predominant, and in *Troilus* the second.

The main emotional theme in *Troilus*—passionate, idealistic love followed by disillusion and despair—is pictured with overwhelming vividness through physical taste; the exquisite anticipation by a sensitive palate of delicious food and wine, and the sick revolt and disgust on finding on one's tongue only 'greasy relics' or rotting fruit.

The disgust at woman's wantonness seems to express itself instinctively to Shakespeare, especially in these two plays and in *Antony*, in terms of physical appetite and food. 'Heaven and earth' cries Hamlet,

she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't.

So lust, says the elder Hamlet, 'though to a radiant angel link'd', will 'prey on garbage'.

Cleopatra, like Cressid, is thought of as a tempting and delicious piece of food, 'a dish for the gods';

other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies:

and in moments of revulsion both alike become a cold and greasy remnant: 'I found you', says Antony,

'as a morsel cold upon
Dead Cæsar's trencher.'

In like manner, before Troilus has been undeceived he thinks of his sweet love as 'food for fortune's tooth', and when the revulsion of disgust follows her treachery, he cries bitterly,

The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

In that amazing image of the anticipation of her love it is the sense of taste which comes naturally to Troilus's lips as the means of expressing it:

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
The imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,
When that the watery palates taste indeed
Love's thrice repured nectar?

and it is an image drawn from the same sense, as applied to 'the poor creature, small beer', which Cressid uses when Pandarus urges her to moderate her emotion at the thought of parting from Troilus,

how can I moderate it?
If I could temporise with my affection,
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
The like allayment could I give my grief.

Troilus, in the vivid, passionate speeches, the metaphors of which throw so much light on his character (II. ii. 26-32, 37-50, 61-96), twice draws upon food to make his thought more clear. Thus, for instance, when he is fulminating against the prudent counsels of his brothers to let Helen go, based on reason, he uses a curious metaphor from a jugged or stuffed hare, which is clearly an associative one. He scorns their timidity, and in true Shakespearean fashion he expresses the quality by the concrete example of the most timid animal of the fields in England, turning it into an adjective; this, in turn, calls up the memory of the succulent dish still a favourite one with

English country folk, and he applies the process of the larding, and cooking of it (which he clearly knows well) to the dulling of men's minds and the sapping of their fiery manhood with overmuch reason and caution:

> Nay, if we talk of reason,
> Let's shut our gates and sleep: manhood and honour
> Should have hare-hearts, would they but fat their thoughts
> With this cramm'd reason.

And a little later, when he is again urging them to stand firm by honour, though it may not be the easiest way or suit them at the moment, he takes an example from ordinary, thrifty household management to illustrate this:

> nor the remainder viands
> We do not throw in unrespective seive,
> Because we now are full.

The force of this dominating symbol is so great that we find that fourteen of the characters make use of images of food, taste, or cooking, and that there are no less than forty-four such images in the play: seething, stewing, mincing, baking, larding, stuffing, broiling, basting, brewing, frying, kneading, boiling, and stirring the ingredients for a pudding, are among the various kinds of cooking described or referred to, sometimes at considerable length, as in the metaphor on grinding the wheat, bolting, leavening, kneading, making the cake, heating the oven, baking, and cooling, carried on with expert knowledge by Pandarus and complete understanding by Troilus in the opening of the play (I. i. 14-26).

A 'crusty batch' (of bread), cheese served for a digestive, or mouse-eaten and dry, an addled egg, mincemeat seasoned with spice and salt and baked in a pie, porridge after meat, a dish of fool (stewed fruit crushed with cream), a fusty nut, a hard sailor's biscuit, fair fruit rotting untasted in an unwholesome dish, and greasy remnants of food are, in addition, all pressed into service; as are also hunger, appetite, ravenous eating, digestion, fasting, feeding, tasting, drinking up the lees and dregs of wine, tossing off a toast, sauce, flavouring, salt, sweet and sour.

Indeed, images of cooking seem so constantly with the speakers that they cannot refrain from using them even in the most far-fetched way; as when Pandarus describes how, when Helen was playing with Troilus, Queen Hecuba laughed so that her eyes ran o'er, and Cassandra laughed, to which Cressida quickly retorts,

> But there was more temperate fire under the pot of her eyes: did her eyes run o'er too?

Or when Ulysses refers to Achilles as the proud lord

> That bastes his arrogance with his own seam (lard),

and declares that if, as had been suggested, Ajax went to him,

> That were to enlard his fat-already pride.

Shakespeare's Imagery.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

WRITTEN: 1603.

PERFORMED: No record of early performance.

S.R.: 1623. 8 November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. Not a very good text: some indications of cutting, and of additions by the book-keeper (prompter).

SOURCE: Boccaccio's tale of *Giglietta di Nerbona* in the *Decameron*, translated in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 1566.

It has been suggested that *All's Well* is a revised version of *Love Labours Won* mentioned by Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. J. M. Robertson attributes *All's Well* mainly to Chapman; on the other hand Sir Edmund Chambers does 'not see that any other assumption helps to make this difficult play more intelligible than the assumption of Shakespeare working in an abnormal mood'. But it seems quite clear to me that there are either two hands or two Shakespeares in the play.

JOHNSON. This play has many delightful scenes, though not sufficiently probable, and some happy characters, though not new, nor produced by any deep knowledge of human nature. Parolles is a boaster and a coward, such as has always been the sport of the stage, but, perhaps, never raised more laughter or contempt than in the hands of Shakespeare.

I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram; a man noble without generosity, and young without truth; who marries Helen as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate: when she is dead by his unkindness, sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by a woman whom he has wronged, defends himself by falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness.

The story of Bertram and Diana had been told before of Mariana and Angelo, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time.

COLERIDGE.

> *Dia* The Count Rousillon:—know you such a one?
> *Hel.* But by the ear that hears most nobly of him;
> His face I know not.

Shall we say here, that Shakspeare has unnecessarily made his loveliest character utter a lie?

HAZLITT. *All's Well that Ends Well* is one of the most pleasing of our author's comedies. The interest is however more of a serious than of a comic nature. The character of Helen is one of great sweetness and

delicacy. She is placed in circumstances of the most critical kind, and has to court her husband both as a virgin and a wife: yet the most scrupulous nicety of female modesty is not once violated. There is not one thought or action that ought to bring a blush into her cheeks, or that for a moment lessens her in our esteem.

GERVINUS. In few plays do we feel, so much as in *All's Well that Ends Well*, what excessive scope the poet leaves open to the actor's art. Few readers, and still fewer female readers, will believe in Helena's womanly nature, even after they have read our explanations and have found them indisputable. The subject has at once repelled them; and so far would we gladly make allowance for this feeling, that we grant that Shakespeare might better have bestowed his psychological art upon more agreeable matter, and that he has often done so. But even he who, by the aid of our remarks, may have overcome his repugnance to the subject, will seldom find himself able by reflection to imagine it possible that such bold and masculine steps could be taken in a thoroughly feminine manner. Only by seeing this work of art and by trusting the eye, can we be sensible of its full and harmonious effect. But that even the eye may be convinced, a great actress is required. Bertram also demands a good actor, if the spectator is to perceive that this is a man capable of rewarding efforts so great on the part of a woman, a man whose painful wooing promises a grateful possession. That this unsentimental youth has a heart, this corrupted libertine a good heart, that this scorner can ever love the scorned, this is indeed *read* in his scanty words, but few readers of the present day are free enough from sentimentality to believe such things on the credit of a few words. The case is entirely different when, in the *acted* Bertram, they *see* the noble nature, the ruin of his character at Florence, and the contrition which his sins and his simplicity call forth; when, from the whole bearing of the brusque man, they perceive what the one word 'pardon' signified in his mouth, when they see his breast heave at the last appearance of Helena bringing ease to his conscience. Credence is then given to his last words; for the great change in his nature—of which now only a forlorn word or two is read and overlooked—would then have been witnessed. Seldom has a task so independent as the character of Bertram been left to the art of the actor; but still more seldom is the actor to be found, who knows how to execute it.

Shakespeare Commentaries.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

WRITTEN: 1603.

PERFORMED: 1604. Dec. 26 at Whitehall. 'By his Maiesties plaiers. On St Stiuens night in the Hall A Play Caled Mesur for Mesur. Shaxberd.' (*Revels Account.*)

S.R.: 1623. 8 November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. Not a good text; possibly from a transcript of the original MS. There are indications of cutting.

SOURCES: George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), a play based on a story in Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* or *Hundred Tales* (1565).

J. M. Robertson considers *Measure for Measure* 'a working recast by Shakespeare of a play drafted by Chapman on the basis of the older play by Whetstone'.

D'Avenant wrote an adaptation, *The Law against Lovers*, in which he combined *Measure for Measure* with Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado*. In 1699 Charles Gildon shortened *Measure for Measure* and introduced a masque and music.

PEPYS. I went to the Opera, and saw 'The Law against Lovers', a good play and well performed, especially the little girls, whom I never saw act before, dancing and singing.

Diary, Feb. 18th, 1662.

JOHNSON. There is, perhaps, not one of Shakespeare's plays more darkened than this, by the peculiarities of its author, and the unskilfulness of its editors, by distortions of phrase, or negligence of transcription.

The novel of Giraldi Cynthio, from which Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed this fable, may be read in Shakespeare Illustrated, elegantly translated, with remarks, which will assist the inquirer to discover how much absurdity Shakespeare has admitted or avoided. . . .

Of this play, the light or comic part is very natural and pleasing, but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labour than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite; some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the duke and the imprisonment of Claudio; for he must have learned the story of Mariana in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.

COLERIDGE. This play, which is Shakespeare's throughout, is to me the most painful—say rather, the only painful—part of his genuine works. The comic and tragic parts equally border on the μισητὸν,—the one being disgusting, the other horrible; and the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice—(for cruelty,

with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of;) but it is likewise degrading to the character of woman. Beaumont and Fletcher, who can follow Shakspeare in his errors only, have presented a still worse, because more loathsome and contradictory, instance of the same kind in the Night-Walker, in the marriage of Alathe to Algripe. Of the counter-balancing beauties of Measure for Measure, I need say nothing; for I have already remarked that the play is Shakspeare's throughout.

HAZLITT. This is a play as full of genius as it is of wisdom. Yet there is an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents us from taking a cordial interest in it. 'The height of moral argument' which the author has maintained in the intervals of passion or blended with the more powerful impulses of nature, is hardly surpassed in any of his plays. But there is in general a want of passion; the affections are at a stand; our sympathies are repulsed and defeated in all directions. The only passion which influences the story is that of Angelo; and yet he seems to have a much greater passion for hypocrisy than for his mistress. Neither are we greatly enamoured of Isabella's rigid chastity, though she could not act otherwise than she did. We do not feel the same confidence in the virtue that is 'sublimely good' at another's expense, as if it had been put to some less disinterested trial. As to the Duke, who makes a very imposing and mysterious stage-character, he is more absorbed in his own character than attentive to the feelings and apprehensions of others. Claudio is the only person who feels naturally; and yet he is placed in circumstances of distress which almost preclude the wish for his deliverance. Mariana is also in love with Angelo, whom we hate. In this respect, there may be said to be a general system of cross-purposes between the feelings of the different characters and the sympathy of the reader or the audience. This principle of repugnance seems to have reached its height in the character of Master Barnadine, who not only sets at defiance the opinions of others, but has even thrown off all self-regard,—'one that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, and to come'. He is a fine antithesis to the morality and the hypocrisy of the other characters of the play. Barnardine is Caliban transported from Prospero's wizard island to the forests of Bohemia or the prisons of Vienna. He is the creature of bad habits as Caliban is of gross instincts. He has however a strong notion of the natural fitness of things, according to his own sensations—'He has been drinking hard all night, and he will not be hanged that day'—and Shakespear has let him off at last. We do not understand why the philosophical German critic, Schlegel, should be so severe on those pleasant persons, Lucio, Pompey, and Master Froth, as to call them 'wretches'. They appear all mighty comfortable in their occupations, and determined to pursue them, 'as the flesh and fortune should serve'. A very good exposure of the want of self-knowledge and contempt for others, which is so common in the world, is put into the mouth of Abhorson, the jailor, when the Provost proposes to associate Pompey with him in

his office—'A bawd, sir? Fie upon him, he will discredit our mystery.' And the same answer will serve in nine instances out of ten to the same kind of remark, 'Go to, sir, you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale.' Shakespear was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. The object of the pedantic moralist is to find out the bad in everything: his was to shew that 'there is some soul of goodness in things evil'. Even Master Barnardine is not left to the mercy of what others think of him; but when he comes in, speaks for himself, and pleads his own cause, as well as if counsel had been assigned him. In one sense, Shakespear was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of all moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learned from her. He showed the greatest knowledge of humanity with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.

WALTER PATER. In *Measure for Measure*, as in some other of his plays, Shakespeare has remodelled an earlier and somewhat rough composition to 'finer issues', suffering much to remain as it had come from the less skilful hand, and not raising the whole of his work to an equal degree of intensity. Hence perhaps some of that depth and weightiness which makes this play so impressive, as with the true seal of experience, like a fragment of life itself, rough and disjointed indeed, but forced to yield in places its profounder meaning. In *Measure for Measure*, in contrast with the flawless execution of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare has spent his art in just enough modification of the scheme of the older play to make it exponent of this purpose, adapting its terrible essential incidents, so that Coleridge found it the only painful work among Shakespeare's dramas, and leaving for the reader of to-day more than the usual number of difficult expressions; but infusing a lavish colour and a profound significance into it, so that under his touch certain select portions of it rise far above the level of all but his own best poetry, and working out of it a morality so characteristic that the play might well pass for the central expression of his moral judgments. It remains a comedy, as indeed is congruous with the bland, half-humorous equity which informs the whole composition, sinking from the heights of sorrow and terror into the rough scheme of the earlier piece; yet it is hardly less full of what is really tragic in man's existence than if Claudio had indeed 'stooped to death'. Even the humorous concluding scenes have traits of special grace, retaining in less emphatic passages a stray line or word of power, as it seems, so that we watch to the end for the traces where the nobler hand has glanced along, leaving its vestiges, as if accidentally or wastefully, in the rising of the style.

Appreciations.

OTHELLO

WRITTEN: 1604.

PERFORMED: 1604. 'By the Kings Maiesties plaiers. Hallamas Day being the first of Nouember A Play in the Banketinge house att WhitHall Called The Moor of Venis.' (*Revels Account.*)
1610, April. 'Lundi, 30. S.E. [Prince Lewis of Württemberg] alla au Globe, lieu ordinaire ou l'on joue les Commedies, y fut representé l'histoire du More de Venise.'
1612-13. One of the plays acted at Whitehall at the 'Magnificent Marriage' of Princess Elizabeth.
1629. 'The benefitt of the winters day from the kinges company being brought me [Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels] upon the play of The Moor of Venise, comes, this 22 of Nov. 1629, unto—9^{l}. 16^{s}. o^{d}.
1635. 'Maij. 6: not farre from home all day att ye bla: ffryers & a play yis day called ye More of Venice.' (*Diary* of Sir Humphrey Mildmay.)
1636. 'Playes acted before the kinge and Queene this present yeare of the lord, 1636 . . . The 8th of December at Hampton Court, the Moore of Venice.'

S.R.: 1621, by Thomas Walkley. 1628, transferred to Richard Hawkins; 1638 to Mead and Meredith; 1639 to W. Leake.

PUBLISHED: 1622 Q1. 'The Tragœdy of Othello, The Moore of Venice. As it hath beene diuerse times acted at the Globe, and at the Black-Friers, by his Maiesties Seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' A good text; probably printed from a transcript of the original MS.
1623 F1. A good text; probably printed from the original MS.
Q2 1630. Set up from Q1 with reference to F1.
Q3 1655.

SOURCE: Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi.*

THOMAS WALKLEY. To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English prouerbe, A blew coat without a badge, & the Author being dead, I thought good to take that piece of worke vpon mee: To commend it, I will not, for that which is good, I hope euery man will commend, without intreaty: and I am the bolder, because the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leauing euery one to the liberty of iudgement: I haue ventered to print this Play, and leaue it to the generall censure.

The Stationer to the Reader, Q1, 1622.

PEPYS. To the Cockpit to see 'The Moor of Venice', which was well done. Burt acted the Moor: by the same token, a very pretty lady that sat by me called out, to see Desdemona smothered. (*Oct. 11th*, 1660.)

To Deptford by water, reading 'Othello, Moor of Venice', which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play; but, having so lately read 'The Adventures of Five Houres', it seems a mean thing. (*Aug. 20th*, 1666.)

RYMER. From all the Tragedies acted on our English Stage, *Othello* is said to bear the Bell away. The Subject is more of a piece, and there is indeed something like, there is, as it were, some phantom of a *Fable* . . . Shakespear alters it from the Original in several particulars, but always, unfortunately, for the worse. He bestows a name on his *Moor*; and styles him the Moor of *Venice*: a Note of pre-eminence, which neither History nor Heraldry can allow him. . . .

What ever rubs or difficulties may stick on the Bark, the Moral, sure, of this Fable is very instructive.

1. First, This may be a caution to all Maidens of Quality how, without their Parents consent, they run away with Blackamoors.

Secondly, this may be a warning to all good Wives, that they look well to their Linnen.

Thirdly, This may be a lesson to Husbands, that before their Jealousie be Tragical, the proofs may be Mathematical.

The *Characters* or Manners, which are the second part in a Tragedy, are not less unnatural and improper, than the Fable was improbable and absurd. . . .

But what is most intolerable is *Jago*. He is no Black-amoor Souldier, so we may be sure he should be like other Souldiers of our acquaintance; yet never in Tragedy, nor in Comedy, nor in Nature was a Souldier with his Character. . . .

Shakespear knew his Character of *Jago* was inconsistent. In this very Play he pronounces,

> *If thou dost deliver more or less than Truth,*
> *Thou art no Souldier.*

This he knew, but to entertain the Audience with something new and surprising, against common sense, and Nature, he would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, insinuating rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain-dealing Souldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the World. . . .

The third thing to be consider'd is the *Thoughts*. But from such *Characters*, we need not expect many that are either true, or fine, or noble.

And without these, that is, without sense or meaning, the fourth part of Tragedy, which is the *expression* can hardly deserve to be treated on distinctly. The verse rumbling in our Ears are of good use to help off the action.

In the *Neighing* of an Horse, or in the *growling* of a Mastiff, there is a meaning, there is as lively expression, and, may I say, more humanity, than many times in the Tragical flights of *Shakespear*.

Step then amongst the Scenes to observe the Conduct in this Tragedy. . . .

Whence comes it then, that this is the top scene (III. 3), the Scene that raises *Othello* above all other Tragedies on our Theatres? It is purely from the Action; from the Mops and the Mows, the Grimace, the Grins and Gesticulation. Such scenes as this have made all the World run after *Harlequin* and *Scaramuccio*. . . .

So much ado, so much stress, so much passion and repetition about an Handkerchief! Why was not this call'd the *Tragedy of the Handkerchief?* Had it been *Desdemona's* Garter the Sagacious Moor might have smelt a Rat: but the Handkerchief is so remote a trifle, no Booby, on this side *Mauritania*, cou'd make any consequence from it. . . .

What can remain with the Audience to carry home with them from this sort of Poetry, for their use and edification? how can it work, unless (instead of settling the mind, and purging our passions) to delude our senses, disorder our thoughts, addle our brain, pervert our affections, hair our imaginations, corrupt our appetite, and fill our head with vanity, confusion, *Tintamarre*, and Jingle-jangle, beyond what all the Parish Clarks of *London*, with their *old Testament* farces, and interludes, in *Richard* the seconds time cou'd ever pretend to? Our only hopes, for the good of their Souls, can be, that these people go to the Play-house, as they do to Church, to sit still, look on one another, make no reflection, nor mind the Play, more than they would a Sermon.

There is in this Play, some burlesk, some humour, and ramble of Comical Wit, some shew, and some *Mimickry* to divert the spectators: but the tragical part is, plainly none other, than a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour.

A Short View of Tragedy, 1693.

CHARLES GILDON. I'm assured from very good hands, that the Person that Acted Jago was in much esteem for a Comœdian, which made *Shakespear* put several words, and expressions into his part (perhaps not so agreeable to his Character) to make the Audience laugh, who had not yet learnt to endure to be serious a whole Play.

Reflections on Rymer's Short View of Tragedy, 1694.

JOHNSON. The beauties of this play impress themselves so strongly upon the attention of the reader, that they can draw no aid from critical illustration. The fiery openness of Othello, magnanimous, artless, and credulous, boundless in his confidence, ardent in his affection, inflexible in his resolution, and obdurate in his revenge; the cool malignity of Iago, silent in his resentment, subtle in his designs, and studious at once of his interest and vengeance; the soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit, and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in

human nature, as, I suppose, it is vain to seek in any modern writer. The gradual progress which Iago makes in the Moor's conviction, and the circumstances which he employs to enflame him, are so artfully natural, that, though it will, perhaps, not be said of him as he says of himself, that he is 'a man not easily jealous', yet we cannot but pity him, when at last we find him 'perplexed in the extreme'.

There is always danger, lest wickedness, conjoined with abilities, should steal upon esteem, though it misses of approbation; but the character of Iago is so conducted, that he is, from the first scene to the last, hated and despised. . . .

The scenes, from the beginning to the end, are busy, varied by happy interchanges, and regularly promoting the progression of the story; and the narrative, in the end, though it tells but what is known already, yet is necessary to produce the death of Othello.

Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

LAMB. Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage. But how many dramatic personages are there in Shakspeare which though more tractable and feasible (if I may so speak) than Lear, yet from some circumstance, some adjunct to their character, are improper to be shown to our bodily eye! Othello for instance. Nothing can be more soothing, more flattering to the nobler parts of our natures, than to read of a young Venetian lady of the highest extraction, through the force of love and from a sense of merit in him whom she loved, laying aside every consideration of kindred, and country, and colour, and wedding with a *coal-black Moor*—(for such he is represented, in the imperfect state of knowledge respecting foreign countries in those days, compared with our own, or in compliance with popular notions, though the Moors are now well enough known to be by many shades less unworthy of a white man's fancy)—it is the perfect triumph of virtue over accidents, of the imagination over the senses. She sees Othello's colour in his mind. But upon the stage, when the imagination is no longer the ruling faculty, but we are left to our poor unassisted senses, I appeal to every one that has seen Othello played, whether he did not, on the contrary, sink Othello's mind in his colour; whether he did not find something extremely revolting in the courtship and wedded caresses of Othello and Desdemona; and whether the actual sight of the thing did not over-weigh all that beautiful compromise which we make in reading;—and the reason it should do so is obvious, because there is just so much reality presented to our senses as to give a perception of disagreement, with not enough of belief in the internal motives,—all that which is unseen,—to overpower and reconcile the first and obvious prejudices.[1] What we see upon a stage is body and bodily action; what we are conscious of in reading is almost exclusively the mind, and its

[1] In the reading of the play, we see with Desdemona's eyes: in the seeing of it, we are forced to look with our own.

movements; and this I think may sufficiently account for the very different sort of delight with which the same play so often affects us in the reading and the seeing.

On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

COLERIDGE Roderigo turns off to Othello; and here comes one, if not the only, seeming justification of our blackamoor or negro Othello.

> *Rod.* What a full fortune does the *thick-lips* owe,
> If he can carry't thus.

Even if we supposed this an uninterrupted tradition of the theatre, and that Shakespeare himself, from want of scenes, and the experience that nothing could be made too marked for the senses of his audience, had practically sanctioned it,—would this prove aught concerning his own intention as a poet for all ages? Can we imagine him so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth,—at a time, too, when negroes were not known except as slaves?—As for Iago's language to Brabantio, it implies merely that Othello was a Moor, that is, black. Though I think the rivalry of Roderigo sufficient to account for his wilful confusion of Moor and Negro,—yet, even if compelled to give this up, I should think it only adapted for the acting of the day, and should complain of an enormity built on a single word, in direct contradiction of Iago's 'Barbary horse'. Besides, if we could in good earnest believe Shakspeare ignorant of the distinction, still why should we adopt one disagreeable possibility instead of a ten times greater and more pleasing probability? It is a common error to mistake the epithets applied by the *dramatis personæ* to each other, as truly descriptive of what the audience ought to see or know. No doubt Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind; yet, as we are constituted, and most surely as an English audience was disposed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro. It would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance, in Desdemona, which Shakspeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated. . . .

Finally, let me repeat that Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, but in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago, such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained who had believed Iago's honesty as Othello did. We, the audience, know that Iago is a villain from the beginning; but in considering the essence of the Shakspearian Othello, we must perseveringly place ourselves in his situation, and under his circumstances. Then we shall immediately feel the fundamental difference between the solemn agony of the noble Moor, and the wretched fishing jealousies of Leontes, and the morbid suspiciousness of Leonatus, who is, in other respects, a fine character. Othello had no life but in Desdemona:—the belief that she, his angel, had fallen from the heaven of her native innocence, wrought a civil war in his heart. She is his counterpart; and, like him, is almost sanctified in our eyes by her absolute unsuspiciousness, and holy entireness of love. As the curtain drops, which do we pity the most?

HAZLITT. Tragedy creates a balance of the affections. It makes us thoughtful spectators in the lists of life. It is the refiner of the species; a discipline of humanity. The habitual study of poetry and works of imagination is one chief part of a well-grounded education. A taste for liberal art is necessary to complete the character of a gentleman. Science alone is hard and mechanical. It exercises the understanding upon things out of ourselves, while it leaves the affections unemployed, or engrossed with our own immediate, narrow interests.—*Othello* furnishes an illustration of these remarks. It excites our sympathy in an extraordinary degree. The moral it conveys has a closer application to the concerns of human life than that of almost any other of Shakespear's plays. 'It comes directly home to the bosoms and business of men.' The pathos in *Lear* is indeed more dreadful and overpowering: but it is less natural, and less of every day's occurrence. We have not the same degree of sympathy with the passions described in *Macbeth*. The interest in *Hamlet* is more remote and reflex. That of *Othello* is at once equally profound and affecting. . . .

The third act of *Othello* is his finest display, not of knowledge or passion separately, but of the two combined, of the knowledge of character with the expression of passion, of consummate art in the keeping up of appearances with the profound workings of nature, and the convulsive movements of uncontrollable agony, of the power of inflicting torture and of suffering it. Not only is the tumult of passion in Othello's mind heaved up from the very bottom of the soul, but every the slightest undulation of feeling is seen on the surface as it arises from the impulses of imagination or the malicious suggestions of Iago. . . .

The character of Iago is one of the supererogations of Shakespear's genius. Some persons, more nice than wise, have thought this whole character unnatural, because his villainy is *without a sufficient motive*. Shakespear, who was as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise. He knew that the love of power, which is another name for the love of mischief, is natural to man. He would know this as well or better than if it had been demonstrated to him by a logical diagram, merely from seeing children paddle in the dirt or kill flies for sport. Iago in fact belongs to a class of character, common to Shakspeare and at the same time peculiar to him; whose heads are as acute and active as their hearts are hard and callous. Iago is to be sure an extreme instance of the kind; that is to say, of diseased intellectual activity, with the most perfect indifference to moral good or evil, or rather with a decided preference of the latter, because it falls more readily in with his favourite propensity, gives greater zest to his thoughts and scope to his actions. He is quite or nearly as indifferent to his own fate as to that of others; he runs all risks for a trifling and doubtful advantage; and is himself the dupe and victim of his ruling passion—an insatiable craving after action of the most difficult and dangerous kind. 'Our ancient' is a philosopher, who fancies that a lie that kills has more point in it than an alliteration or an antithesis; who thinks a fatal experiment on the peace of a family a better thing than watching the palpitations in the heart of a flea in a microscope; who plots the ruin of his friends as an exercise for his ingenuity, and stabs men in the dark to prevent

ennui. His gaiety, such as it is, arises from the success of his treachery; his ease from the torture he has inflicted on others. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life; and instead of employing his invention on imaginary characters, or long-forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connections, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution.

A. C. BRADLEY. What is the peculiarity of Othello? What is the distinctive impression that it leaves? Of all Shakespeare's tragedies, I would answer, not even excepting *King Lear*, *Othello* is the most painfully exciting and the most terrible. From the moment when the temptation of the hero begins, the reader's heart and mind are held in a vice, experiencing the extremes of pity and fear, sympathy and repulsion, sickening hope and dreadful expectation. Evil is displayed before him, not indeed with the profusion found in *King Lear*, but forming, as it were, the soul of a single character, and united with an intellectual superiority so great that he watches its advance fascinated and appalled. He sees it, in itself almost irresistible, aided at every step by fortunate accidents and the innocent mistakes of its victims. He seems to breathe an atmosphere as fateful as that of *King Lear*, but more confined and oppressive, the darkness not of night but of a close-shut murderous room. His imagination is excited to intense activity, but it is the activity of concentration rather than dilation. . . .

There is a question, which, though of little consequence, is not without dramatic interest, whether Shakespeare imagined Othello as a Negro or as a Moor. Now I will not say that Shakespeare imagined him as a Negro and not as a Moor, for that might imply that he distinguished Negroes and Moors precisely as we do; but what appears to me nearly certain is that he imagined Othello as a black man, and not as a light-brown one.

In the first place, we must remember that the brown or bronze, to which we are now accustomed in the Othellos of our theatres is a recent innovation. Down to Edmund Kean's time, so far as is known, Othello was always quite black. This stage-tradition goes back to the Restoration, and it almost settles our question. For it is impossible that the colour of the original Othello should have been forgotten so soon after Shakespeare's time, and most improbable that it should have been changed from brown to black. . . .

But this is not all. The question whether to Shakespeare Othello was black or brown is not a mere question of isolated fact or historical curiosity; it concerns the character of Desdemona. Coleridge, and still more the American writers, regard her love, in effect, as Brabantio regarded it,[1] and not as Shakespeare conceived it. They are simply blurring this glorious conception when they try to lessen the distance between her and Othello, and to smooth away the obstacle which his 'visage' offered to her romantic passion for a hero. Desdemona, the 'eternal womanly' in its most lovely and adorable form, simple and innocent as a child, ardent with the courage and idealism of a saint, radiant with that heavenly purity of heart which men worship the

[1] As 'something monstrous to conceive': Coleridge. (See p. 438.)

more because nature so rarely permits it to themselves, had no theories about universal brotherhood, and no phrases about 'one blood in the nations of the earth' or 'barbarian, Scythian, bond and free'; but when her soul came in sight of the noblest soul on earth, she made nothing of the shrinking of her senses, but followed her soul until her senses took part with it, and 'loved him with the love which was her doom'. It was not prudent. It even turned out tragically. She met in life with the reward of those who rise too far above our common level; and we continue to allot her the same reward when we consent to forgive her for loving a brown man, but find it monstrous that she should love a black one.

Shakespearean Tragedy.

TIMON OF ATHENS

WRITTEN: 1605.

PERFORMED: No record of any Jacobean performance.

S.R.: 1623 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. *Timon* is printed between *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Cæsar* where *Troilus and Cressida* was originally to have gone. There is much mislineation in the text.

SOURCES: Plutarch's *Life of Mark Antony*; Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*; Lucian's dialogue *Timon, or the Misanthrope*.

It has been suggested on the one hand that *Timon of Athens* is Shakespeare's revision of some other dramatist's work, on the other, that some other dramatist has revised the work of Shakespeare. But it may well be that the play is the unfinished work of Shakespeare: a series of uncoordinated scenes, some of them mere sketches. Possibly he abandoned the story of Timon in favour of that of Lear, the theme of which—ingratitude—is the same. If so it would justify Professor Dover Wilson's claim that *Timon* is the 'still-born twin' of *Lear*.

JOHNSON. The play of Timon is a domestic tragedy, and, therefore, strongly fastens on the attention of the reader. In the plan there is not much art, but the incidents are natural, and the characters various and exact. The catastrophe affords a very powerful warning against that ostentatious liberality, which scatters bounty, but confers no benefits, and buys flattery, but not friendship.

In this tragedy are many passages perplexed, obscure, and probably corrupt. . . .

COLERIDGE. But where shall we class the Timon of Athens? Perhaps immediately below Lear. It is a Lear of the satirical drama; a Lear of domestic or ordinary life;—a local eddy of passion on the high road of society, while all around is the week-day goings on of wind and weather; a Lear, therefore, without its soul-searching flashes, its ear-cleaving thunderclaps, its meteoric splendours,—without the contagion and the fearful sympathies of nature, the fates, the furies, the frenzied elements, dancing in and out, now breaking through, and scattering,—now hand in hand with,—the fierce or fantastic group of human passions, crimes, and anguishes, reeling on the unsteady ground, in a wild harmony to the shock and the swell of an earthquake.

HAZLITT. *Timon of Athens* always appeared to us to be written with as intense a feeling of his subject as any one play of Shakespeare. It is one of the few in which he seems to be in earnest throughout, never to trifle nor go out of his way. He does not relax in his efforts, nor lose sight of the unity of his design. It is the only play of our author in which spleen is the predominant feeling of the mind. It is as much a satire as a play: and contains some of the finest pieces of invective possible to be conceived, both in the snarling, captious answers of the cynic Apemantus, and in the impassioned and more terrible imprecations of Timon. The latter remind the classical reader of the force and swelling impetuoisty of the moral declamations in *Juvenal*, while the former have all the keenness and caustic severity of the old Stoic philosophers. The soul of Diogenes appears to have been seated on the lips of Apemantus. The churlish profession of misanthropy in the cynic is contrasted with the profound feeling of it in Timon, and also with the soldier-like and determined resentment of Alcibiades against his countrymen, who have banished him, though this forms only an incidental episode in the tragedy. . . .

The moral sententiousness of this play equals that of Lord Bacon's Treatise on the Wisdom of the Ancients, and is indeed seasoned with greater variety. Every topic of contempt or indignation is here exhausted; but while the sordid licentiousness of Apemantus, which turns everything to gall and bitterness, shews only the natural virulence of his temper and antipathy to good or evil alike, Timon does not utter an imprecation, without betraying the extravagant workings of disappointed passion, of love altered to hate. Apemantus sees nothing good in any object, and exaggerates whatever is disgusting: Timon is tormented with the perpetual contrast between things and appearances, between the fresh, tempting outside and the rottenness within, and invokes mischiefs on the heads of mankind proportioned to the sense of his wrongs and of their treacheries.

ULRICI. In spite of the censured defects of the play, it is, in my opinion, wonderful with what skill Shakspeare has contrived to form so unmanageable a subject, as is offered by the story of Timon, into a living and drastic action. This he has accomplished partly by the relations he has estab-

lished between the life and fortunes of the individual persons and the whole nation and state; particularly, however, by the triple contrast in which he has placed the character of Timon as regards the other chief persons of the piece. In the first place in its contrast to the worthless flatterers and parasites who affect the same friendship, devotion and philanthropy towards Timon, merely in order to prey upon him. These personages are certainly but little individualised, they are in reality as like as peas, and yet the poet has with striking irony contrived to give each his peculiar shade of colour, as is especially indicated in the different ways in which they accept and reject Timon's entreaties for assistance. Opposed to this friendship of semblance and falsehood, stands the true and warm affection of Timon's household, especially that of his steward Flavius, whom Timon declares the only honest man. . . .

A very contrast to Timon, in his self-made misanthropy and in his sincere hatred of mankind, is found in the cynic Apemantus. . . . He moves about like a ridiculous phantom, useless to himself and a burden to others, the warning example of a view of life quite similar to that of Timon's, only that it is the perverted, reverse side. In the end he is far surpassed in his department by Timon, and we may assume that he was affected by this humiliation, or got better of his own accord. Alcibiades, lastly, on the one hand, connects the relations between the personal life of the hero and the general life of the state and people, on the other, he too forms a certain contrast to Timon. Thus he, like all the other characters, is a necessary member of the organism of the whole, in so far as he essentially co-operates in the development of the character of the hero, as well as in the progress of the action, which again is the result of the development of the hero's character. For he exhibits in his person the *right* way in which *such* people, *such* men ought to be treated. He repels injustice by injustice, force by force, and preaches sense snd morality sword in hand. But his *right* manner of ordering life is suitable only for such a *wrong* sort of men, such a law*less* people, and thus, in reality, it is in and of itself simply a *wrong* way.

Now, it is the very fact of Alcibiades being, or at least appearing in the end to be in the right, that constitutes the defect of the drama. It too is wanting in the elevating, conciliatory element of the tragic pathos, and this especially marks its affinity to 'Titus Andronicus'. If Alcibiades is right, then life is not worth the living; there would, in reality, be no history, because there is no ethical progress in humanity.

Shakspeare's Dramatic Art.

KING LEAR

WRITTEN: 1606.

PERFORMED: 1606 Dec 26. 'yt was played before the Kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon Sainct Stephens night at Christmas Last, by his maiesties servantes.'

S.R.: 1607 '26 Novembris. Nathanael Butter John Busby. Entred for their Copie under thandes of Sir George Buck knight and Thwardens A booke called. Master William Shakespeare his historye of Kinge Lear, as yt was played before the Kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon Sainct Stephens night at Christmas Last, by his maiesties servantes playing vsually at the Globe on the Banksyde vj^{d}.'

PUBLISHED: 1608 Q1. 'M. William Shak-speare: His True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters. With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam: As it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes. By his Maiesties seruants playing vsually at the Globe on the Bancke-side.' Not a 'bad' Quarto, but there is much mislineation, little punctuation, and prose printed as verse and verse as prose. It was probably produced from shorthand notes. Q1 omits about 100 lines found in F1.

1619 Q2. One of the ten plays printed by Jaggard, many of them with false dates. This Q is dated 1608.

1623 F1. based on Q1 with alterations possibly from a stage copy. F omits about 300 lines found in Q, including the whole of iv. 3.

1655 Q3.

SOURCES: Holinshed's *Chronicles.*

The *True Chronicle History of King Leir*, an anonymous play written about 1595 and published in 1605.

Spenser's *Faerie Queene* ii. 10.

Sidney's *Arcadia* gives the outline of the Gloucester story.

In 1680 Nahum Tate gave the play a happy ending in which Lear is restored to his kingdom and Cordelia marries Edgar. This version was approved by Johnson and acted by Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean. In 1838 Macready returned to Shakespeare's text throughout.

JOHNSON: But though this moral be incidentally enforced [that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin], Shakespeare has suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of chronicles. Yet his conduct is justified by the Spectator, who blames Tate for giving Cordelia success and happiness in his alteration, and declares, that, in his opinion, 'the tragedy has lost half its beauty'. . . . A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the common events of human life: but since all reasonable beings naturally love justice, I cannot easily be persuaded, that

the observation of justice makes a play worse; or that, if other excellencies are equal, the audience will not always rise better pleased from the final triumph of persecuted virtue.

In the present case the public has decided. Cordelia, from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And, if my sensations could add anything to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.



COLERIDGE. Of all Shakespear's plays Macbeth is the most rapid, Hamlet the slowest, in movement. Lear combines length with rapidity,—like the hurricane and the whirlpool, absorbing while it advances. It begins as a stormy day in summer, with brightness; but that brightness is lurid, and anticipates the tempest.

It was not without forethought, nor is it without its due significance, that the division of Lear's kingdom is in the first six lines of the play stated as a thing already determined in all its particulars, previously to the trial of professions, as the relative rewards of which the daughters were to be made to consider their several portions. . . . These facts, these passions, these moral verities, on which the tragedy is founded, are all prepared for, and will to the retrospect be found implied, in these first four or five lines of the play. They let us know that the trial is but a trick; and that the grossness of the old king's rage is in part the natural result of a silly trick suddenly and most unexpectedly baffled and disappointed.

It may here be worthy of notice, that Lear is the only serious performance of Shakespeare, the interest and situations of which are derived from the assumption of a gross improbability. . . .

In Lear old age is itself a character,—its natural imperfections being increased by life-long habits of receiving a prompt obedience. Any addition of individuality would have been unnecessary and painful; for the relations of others to him, of wondrous fidelity and of frightful ingratitude, alone sufficiently distinguish him. Thus Lear becomes the open and ample play-room of nature's passions. . . .

Edgar's assumed madness serves the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear, and further displays the profound difference between the two. In every attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of dramatic literature, with the single exception of Lear, it is mere lightheadedness. In Edgar's ravings Shakespeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view; in Lear's, there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression.

LAMB. So to see Lear acted,—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take

him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage. While we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear: we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms. In the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodized from the ordinary purposes of life, bur exerting its powers, as 'the wind bloweth where it listeth', at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when, in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old'? What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter; she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the show-men of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdoms that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station!—as if, at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die.

On the Tragedies of Shakespeare.

HAZLITT. King Lear is then the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart; of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed; and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. This depth of nature, this force of passion, this tug and war of the elements of our being, this firm faith in filial piety and the giddy anarchy and whirling tumult of the thoughts at finding this prop failing it, the contrast between the fixed, immoveable

basis of natural affection, and the rapid, irregular starts of imagination, suddenly wrenched from all its accustomed holds and resting-places in the soul, this is what Shakespeare has given, and what nobody else but he could give. . . .

That which aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, and of uncontrollable anguish in the swoln heart of Lear, is the petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passions seem whetted on their stony hearts. The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from overstrained excitement.

A. C. Bradley. The stage is the test of strictly dramatic quality, and *King Lear* is too huge for the stage. Of course, I am not denying that it is a great stage-play. It has scenes immensely effective in the theatre; three of them—the two between Lear and Goneril and between Lear, Goneril and Regan, and the ineffably beautiful scene in the fourth act between Lear and Cordelia—lose in the theatre very little of the spell they have for the imagination; and the gradual interweaving of the two plots is almost as masterly as in *Much Ado*. But (not to speak of defects due to mere carelessness) that which makes the *peculiar* greatness of *King Lear*,—the immense scope of the work; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains; the interpenetration of sublime imagination, piercing pathos, and humour almost as moving as the pathos; the vastness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion; the vagueness of the scene where the action takes place, and of the movements of the figures which cross this scene; the strange atmosphere, cold and dark, which strikes on us as we enter this scene, enfolding these figures and magnifying their dim outlines like a winter mist; the half-realised suggestions of vast universal powers working in the world of individual fates and passions,—all this interferes with dramatic clearness even when the play is read, and in the theatre not only refuses to reveal itself fully through the senses but seems to be almost in contradiction with their reports. This is not so with the other great tragedies. No doubt, as Lamb declared, theatrical representation gives only a part of what we imagine when we read them; but there is no *conflict* between the representation and the imagination, because these tragedies are, in essentials, perfectly dramatic. But *King Lear*, as a whole, is imperfectly dramatic, and there is something in its very essence which is at war with the senses, and demands a purely imaginative realisation. It is therefore, Shakespeare's greatest work, but it is not what Hazlitt called it, the best of his plays; and its comparative unpopularity is due, not merely to the extreme painfulness of the catastrophe, but in part to its dramatic defects, and in part to a failure in many readers to catch the peculiar effects to which I have referred,—a failure which is natural because the appeal is made not so much to dramatic perception as to a rarer and more strictly poetic kind of imagination. For this reason, too,

even the best attempts at exposition of *King Lear* are disappointing; they remind us of attempts to reduce to prose the impalpable spirit of the *Tempest*.
Shakespearean Tragedy.

H. GRANVILLE-BARKER. It is here that the scholars' case against the play as a play for the theatre is weak. Lamb's denunciation, indeed, was occasioned not by Shakespeare's play at all, but by Tate's perversion of it. And though he may declare that neither will he have Shakespeare's *King Lear* in the theatre, it is from nothing like Shakespeare's theatre that he bans it. Lamb's was the age of spectacle; he bases his arguments upon it, not upon Shakespeare's. . . . It was the age of 'the beauties of Shakespeare'. That, its beauty beside, this dynamic verse and prose held secrets of stagecraft does not seem to have been considered. . . .

Bradley's objections to the play's staging are more carefully considered than Lamb's, and they are pretty comprehensive. . . . This objection as a whole involves, I fancy, a fallacy about the theatre in general. . . . Dr. Bradley seems to assume that every sort of play, when acted, ought in a single performance to make a clear, complete and final effect on the spectator. But this is surely not so. We need no more expect to receive—lapses of performance and attention apart—the full value of a great drama at a first hearing than we expect it of a complex piece of music. And what preliminary study of the music, with its straiter laws and more homogeneous material, will effect, study of drama will not. A play's interpretation is an unrulier business, and we must face it rather as we face life itself. When we gather up in our minds the total effect made upon us by some past personal experience, we find it to consist of the then immediate emotion, which we can emotionally recall, of our later judgment of the whole matter, and—lodged between these two—of much hybrid sensation and thought, variously recollected. Now, it is the business of the dramatist, doubtless, in turning actuality to art, to clarify all this sort of thing and bring it to terms. But if he aimed only at its clear statement he would produce no illusion of life at all; and this it is his art to do. . . . *King Lear* does perhaps over-abound in sheer power, and will be apt to excite and confuse our emotions unduly. But the corrective of thought is strongly and currently applied. And I believe we may abandon ourselves to the emotions raised by a performance, confident that the complete and final effect produced on us will be fruitful and equable enough, and that, though we may lose at the time in fullness of understanding, we shall gain in conviction. . . .

Lamb rests his condemnation of the play's acting upon the third act and the scenes in the storm. . . .

Lamb states the case, let us admit, about as simply and well as it can be stated, and he fixes upon the supreme moments of dramatic achievement and theatrical difficulty. If we meet the challenge here and make good answer, may not the rest of the play claim a verdict too? Well, Lamb's case, as I suggest, is a bad case because it shows no recognition at all of Elizabethan stagecraft; his case, in fact, is not against Shakespeare the playwright, but against his betrayal. . . .

The chief strength of Elizabethan stagecraft lay in its comprehensive use of poetry. Plot was carried on, character developed and environment created, by the aid of poetry, emotion was sustained by it and illusion held. . . .

What is his exact dramatic need here, and how does he turn to its account this comprehensive use of verse? Be it verse or prose, he has no other resource, we must remember, than the spoken word of the actor, such action as will not mar it, and a negative background to this action. He has no accessories worth mentioning. . . . Lear, Kent and the rest must *act* the storm then; there is no other way. They must not lose themselves in its description; it will not do for us to be interested in the storm at the expense of our interest in them, the loss there would be more than the gain. For the effect of the storm upon Lear is Shakespeare's true objective. So he has to give it magnitude without detracting for one precious moment during the crisis from Lear's own dramatic supremacy. And he solves his problem by making the actor impersonate Lear and the storm together, by identifying Lear's passion with the storm's. Mere association will not serve; there must be no chance left of a rivalry of interest. . . . This is the basis of his stagecraft, to make Lear and the storm as one. And if Lamb saw 'an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick' he did not see the Lear of Shakespeare's intention.

Prefaces to Shakespeare.

MACBETH

WRITTEN: 1606.

PERFORMED: 1611 April 20th.[1] There must have been many performances before this one seen by Simon Forman at The Globe.

S.R. 1623 8th November. One of the sixteen plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. An unsatisfactory text. There has been cutting—apart from *The Comedy of Errors* it is the shortest of the plays—

[1] SIMON FORMAN. In Mackbeth at the Glob, 1610 (1611?), the 20 of Aprill, ther was to be obserued, firste, howe Mackbeth and Bancko, 2 noble men of Scotland, Ridinge thorowe a wod, the stode before them 3 women feiries or Nimphes, And saluted Mackbeth, sayinge, 3 tyms vnto him, haille Mackbeth, king of Codon; for thou shalt be a kinge, but shalt beget No kinges, &c. . . . The next night, beinge at supper with his noble men whom he had bid to a feaste to the which also Banco should have com, he began to speake of Noble Banco, and to wish that he wer ther. And as he thus did, standing up to drincke a Carouse to him, the ghoste of Banco came and sate down in his cheier behind him. And he turninge About to sit down Again sawe the goste of Banco, which fronted him so, that he fell into a great passion of fear and fury, Vtterynge many wordes about his murder, by which, when they hard that Banco was Murdred they Suspected Macbet.

Book of Plaies.

adaptation, and interpolation: the Hecate scenes are probably by Middleton, for the songs indicated in the stage directions of III. 5 and IV. 1, 'Come away' and 'Black spirits', occur in full in his *The Witch*. F was certainly printed from a prompt-copy, for the book-keeper's note, *Ring the Bell* (II. 3), has been printed in the text:

> Malcolme, Banquo,
> As from your Graues rise vp, and walke like Sprights,
> To countenance this horror, Ring the Bell.
> *Bell rings. Enter Lady.*

SOURCE: Holinshed's *Chronicles*.

D'Avenant wrote a tidy and refined version of Macbeth which held the stage until Garrick's time. The Porter was dropped, the virtuous Lady Macduff balanced the evil Lady Macbeth, and Shakespeare's

> The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon:
> Where got'st thou that goose-look?

became D'Avenant's

> Now Friend, what means thy change of countenance?

It was D'Avenant's version of the play that Pepys saw.

PEPYS. To the Duke's house, to see 'Macbeth', a pretty good play, but admirably acted. (5 *Nov.* 1664.)

To the Duke's House, and there saw 'Macbeth' most excellently acted and a most excellent play for variety. (28 *Dec.* 1666.)

To the Duke's House, and saw 'Macbeth', which, though I saw it lately, yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisement, though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here, and suitable. (7 *Jan.* 1667.)

To the play-house, where saw 'Macbeth', which, though I have seen it often, yet it is one of the best plays for a stage, and variety of dancing and musick, that ever I saw. (19 *April* 1667.)

To the Duke of York's house; and I was vexed to see Young, who is but a bad actor at best, act Macbeth, in the room of Betterton, who, poor man! is sick: but, Lord! what a prejudice it wrought in me against the whole play. and everybody else agreed in disliking this fellow. (15 *Oct.* 1667.)

To the Duke of York's house, and saw 'Macbeth', to our great content. (11 *Aug.* 1668.)

To the Duke's playhouse, and saw 'Macbeth'. The King and Court there; and we sat just under them and my Lady Castlemaine. (21 *Dec.* 1668.)

DRYDEN. In reading some bombast speeches of Macbeth, which are not to be understood, he (Ben Jonson) used to say that it was horror; and I am much afraid that this is so.

On the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age, 1672.

JOHNSON. When Macbeth is confirming himself in the horrid purpose of stabbing his king, he breaks out amidst his emotions into a wish natural for a murderer:

> Come, thick night!
> And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
> That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
> Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
> To cry, Hold, hold!

In this passage is exerted all the force of poetry; that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter; yet, perhaps, scarce any man now peruses it without some disturbance of his attention from the counteraction of the words to the ideas. What can be more dreadful than to implore the presence of night, invested, not in common obscurity, but in the smoke of hell? Yet the efficacy of this invocation is destroyed by the insertion of an epithet now seldom heard but in the stable, and *dun* night may come or go without any other notice than contempt.

If we start into raptures when some hero of the *Iliad* tells us that *δόρυ μαίνεται*, his lance rages with eagerness to destroy; if we are alarmed at the terror of the soldiers commanded by Cæsar to hew down the sacred grove, who dreaded, says Lucan, lest the axe aimed at the oak should fly back upon the striker . . . we cannot surely but sympathize with the horrors of a wretch about to murder his master, his friend, his benefactor, who suspects that the weapon will refuse its office, and start back from the breast which he is preparing to violate. Yet this sentiment is weakened by the name of an instrument used by butchers and cooks in the meanest employments; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife*; or who does not, at last, from the long habit of connecting a knife with sordid offices, feel aversion rather than terror?

Macbeth proceeds to wish, in the madness of guilt, that the inspection of Heaven may be intercepted, and that he may, in the involutions of infernal darkness, escape the eye of Providence. This is the utmost extravagance of determined wickedness: yet this is so debased by two unfortunate words, that while I endeavour to impress on my reader the energy of the sentiment, I can scarcely check my risibility, when the expression forces itself upon my mind; for who, without some relaxation of his gravity, can hear of the avengers of guilt *peeping through a blanket*?

The Rambler, No. 168.

LAMB. Though some resemblance may be traced between the Charms of Macbeth and the Incantations in this Play [Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*], which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakspeare. His witches are distinguished from the witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman plotting some dire mischief might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's,

he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These witches can hurt the body: those have power over the soul. Hecate in Middleton has a son, a low buffoon: the hags of Shakspeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul Anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. Except Hecate, they have no names; which heightens their mysteriousness. Their names, and some of the properties, which Middleton has given to his hags, excite smiles. The weird sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But in a lesser degree, the Witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, *like a thick scurf o'er life.*

Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.

HAZLITT. *Macbeth* (generally speaking) is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespear's plays. It moves upon the verge of an abyss, and is a constant struggle between life and death. The action is desperate and the reaction is dreadful. It is a huddling together of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures which of them shall destroy the other. There is nothing but what has a violent end or violent beginnings. The lights and shades are laid on with a determined hand; the transitions from triumph to despair, from the height of terror to the repose of death, are sudden and startling; every passion brings in its fellow-contrary, and the thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in the dark. The whole play is an unruly chaos of strange and forbidden things, where the ground rocks under our feet. Shakespear's genius here took its full swing, and trod upon the farthest bounds of nature and passion. This circumstance will account for the abruptness and violent antitheses of the style, the throes and labour which run through the expression, and from defects will turn them into beauties. 'So fair and foul a day I have not seen,' etc. 'Such welcome and unwelcome news together.' 'Men's lives are like the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken.' 'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.' The scene before the castle-gate follows the appearance of the Witches on the heath, and is followed by a midnight murder. Duncan is cut off betimes by treason leagued with witchcraft, and Macduff is ripped untimely from his mother's womb to avenge his death. Macbeth, after the death of Banquo, wishes for his presence in extravagant terms, 'To him and all we thirst', and when the ghost appears, cries out, 'Avaunt and quit my sight', and being gone, he is 'himself again'. Macbeth resolves to get rid of Macduff, that 'he may sleep in spite of thunder'; and cheers his wife on the doubtful intelligence of Banquo's taking-off with the encouragement—'then be thou jocund; ere the bat has flown his cloistered flight; ere to black Hecate's summons the shard-born beetle has rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done—a deed of dreadful note.' In Lady Macbeth's speech,

'Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done't', there is murder and filial piety together; and in urging him to fulfil his vengeance against the defenceless king, her thoughts spare the blood neither of infants nor old age. The description of the Witches is full of the same contradictory principle; they 'rejoice when good things bleed', they are neither of the earth nor the air, but both; they 'should be women but their beards forbid it'; they take all the pains possible to lead Macbeth on to the height of his ambition, only to betray him 'in deeper consequence', and after showing him all the pomp of their art, discover their malignant delight in his disappointed hopes, by that bitter taunt, 'Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?' We might multiply such instances everywhere.

COLERIDGE. Macbeth stands in contrast throughout with Hamlet; in the manner of opening more especially. In the latter, there is a gradual ascent from the simplest forms of conversation to the language of impassioned intellect,—yet the intellect still remaining the seat of passion: in the former, the invocation is at once made to the imagination and the emotions connected therewith. Hence the movement throughout is the most rapid of all Shakespeare's plays; and hence also, with the exception of the disgusting passage of the Porter which I dare pledge myself to demonstrate to be an interpolation of the actors, there is not, to the best of my remembrance, a single pun or play on words in the whole drama. I have previously given an answer to the thousand times repeated charge against Shakspeare upon the subject of his punning, and I here merely mention the fact of the absence of any puns in Macbeth, as justifying a candid doubt at least, whether even in these figures of speech and fanciful modifications of language, Shakspeare may not have followed rules and principles that merit and would stand the test of philosophic examination. And hence, also, there is an entire absence of comedy, nay, even of irony and philosophic contemplation in Macbeth,—the play being wholly and purely tragic. For the same cause, there are no reasonings of equivocal morality, which would have required a more leisurely state and a consequently greater activity of mind;—no sophistry of self-delusion,—except only that previously to the dreadful act, Macbeth mistranslates the recoilings and ominous whispers of conscience into prudential and selfish reasonings, and, after the deed done, the terrors of remorse into fear from external dangers,—like delirious men who run away from the phantoms of their own brains, or, raised by terror to rage, stab the real object that is within their reach:—whilst Lady Macbeth merely endeavours to reconcile his and her own sinkings of heart by anticipations of the worst, and an affected bravado in confronting them. In all the rest, Macbeth's language is the grave utterance of the very heart, conscience-sick, even to the last faintings of moral death. It is the same in all the other characters. The variety arises from rage, caused ever and anon by disruption of anxious thought, and the quick transition of fear into it.

DE QUINCEY. For the remarkable essay *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* see p. 315.

A. C. BRADLEY. A Shakespearean tragedy, as a rule, has a special tone or atmosphere of its own, quite perceptible, however difficult to describe. The effect of this atmosphere is marked with unusual strength in *Macbeth*. It is due to a variety of influences which combine with those just noticed, so that, acting and reacting, they form a whole; and the desolation of the blasted heath, the design of the Witches, the guilt in the hero's soul, the darkness of the night, seem to emanate from one and the same source. This effect is strengthened by a multitude of small touches, which at the moment may be little noticed but still leave their mark on the imagination. We may approach the consideration of the characters and the action by distinguishing some of the ingredients of this general effect.

Darkness, we may even say blackness, broods over this tragedy. It is remarkable that almost all the scenes which at once recur to memory take place either at night or in some dark spot. The vision of the dagger, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo, the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth, all come in night-scenes. The Witches dance in the thick air of a storm, or, 'black and midnight hags', receive Macbeth in a cavern. The blackness of night is to the hero a thing of fear, even of horror; and that which he feels becomes the spirit of the play. . . .

The atmosphere of *Macbeth*, however, is not that of unrelieved blackness. On the contrary, as compared with *King Lear* and its cold dim gloom, *Macbeth* leaves a decided impression of colour; it is really the impression of a black night broken by flashes of light and colour, sometimes vivid and even glaring. They are the lights and colours of the thunder-storm in the first scene; of the dagger hanging before Macbeth's eyes and glittering alone in the midnight air; of the torch borne by the servant. . . . And, above all, the colour is the colour of blood. It cannot be an accident that the image of blood is forced upon us continually, not merely by the events themselves, but by full descriptions, and even by reiteration of the word in unlikely parts of the dialogue. . . .

Let us observe another point. The vividness, magnitude, and violence of the imagery in some of these passages are characteristic of *Macbeth* almost throughout; and their influence contributes to form its atmosphere. Images like those of the babe torn smiling from the breast and dashed to death; of pouring the sweet milk of concord into hell; of the earth shaking in fever; of the frame of things disjointed; . . . all keep the imagination moving on a 'wild and violent sea', while it is scarcely for a moment permitted to dwell on thoughts of peace and beauty. In its language, as in its action, the drama is full of tumult and storm. . . .

Now all these agencies—darkness, the lights and colours that illuminate it, the storm that rushes through it, the violent and gigantic images—conspire with the appearances of the Witches and the Ghost to awaken horror, and in some degree also a supernatural dread. And to this effect other influences contribute. The pictures called up by the mere words of the Witches stir the same feelings. . . . All this has one effect, to excite supernatural alarm and, even more, a dread of the presence of evil not only in its recognised seat but

all through and around our mysterious nature. Perhaps there is no other work equal to *Macbeth* in the production of this effect.

Shakespearean Tragedy.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

WRITTEN: 1607.

PERFORMED: No record of an early performance.

S.R.: 1608 '20 Maij. Edward Blount. Entred for his copie under thandes of Sir George Buck knight and Master Warden Seton A booke called. The Booke of Pericles prynce of Tyre. vj^{d}. Edward Blount. Entred also for his copie by the like Aucthoritie. A booke called Anthony. and Cleopatra. vj^{d}.'
1623 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A fair text.

SOURCE: North's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Antonius*.

Dryden's version of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All for Love*, was produced at Drury Lane in 1677-8.

DRYDEN. In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but that this is more proper to my present purpose. I hope I need not to explain myself, that I have not copied my author servilely: words and phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding ages; but it is almost a miracle that much of his language remains so pure; and that he who began Dramatic Poetry amongst us, untaught by any, and as Ben Johnson tells us, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that in a manner he has left no praise for any who come after him.

Preface to All for Love.

JOHNSON. This play keeps curiosity always busy, and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward, without intermission, from the first act to the last. But the power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene; for, except the feminine arts, some of which are too low, which distinguish

Cleopatra, no character is very strongly discriminated. Upton, who did not easily miss what he desired to find, has discovered that the language of Antony is, with great skill and learning, made pompous and superb, according to his real practice. But I think his diction not distinguishable from that of others: the most tumid speech in the play is that which Cæsar makes to Octavia.

The events, of which the principal are described according to history, are produced without any art of connexion or care of disposition.

COLERIDGE. The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the Antony and Cleopatra is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, and Othello. *Feliciter audax* is the motto for its style comparatively with that of Shakspeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works compared with those of other poets. Be it remembered, too, that this happy valiancy of style is but the representative and result of all the material excellencies so expressed.

This play should be perused in mental contrast with Romeo and Juliet; as the love of passion and appetite opposed to the love of affection and instinct. But the art displayed in the character of Cleopatra is profound; in this, especially, that the sense of criminality in her passion is lessened by our insight into its depth and energy, at the very moment that we cannot but perceive that the passion itself springs out of the habitual craving of a licentious nature, and that it is supported and reinforced by voluntary stimulus and sought-for associations, instead of blossoming out of spontaneous emotion.

Of all Shakspeare's historical plays, Antony and Cleopatra is by far the most wonderful. There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much; perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakspeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakspeare in your heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's All For Love.

HAZLITT. This is a very noble play. Though not in the first class of Shakespear's productions, it stands next to them, and is, we think, the finest of his historical plays, that is, of those in which he made poetry the organ of history, and assumed a certain tone of character and sentiment, in conformity to known facts, instead of trusting to his observations of general nature or to the unlimited indulgence of his own fancy. What he has added to the actual story, is upon a par with it. His genius was, as it were, a match for history as well as nature, and could grapple at will with either. The play is full of that pervading comprehensive power by which the poet could always

make himself master of time and circumstances. It presents a fine picture of Roman pride and Eastern magnificence: and in the struggle between the two, the empire of the world seems suspended 'like the swan's down-feather,

> That stands upon the swell at full of tide,
> And neither way inclines'.

The characters breathe, move, and live. Shakespear does not stand reasoning on what his characters would do or say, but at once *becomes* them, and speaks and acts for them. He does not present us with groups of stage-puppets or poetical machines making set speeches on human life, and acting from a calculation of problematical motives, but he brings living men and women on the scene, who speak and act from real feelings, according to the ebbs and flows of passion, without the least tincture of pedantry of logic or rhetoric. Nothing is made out by inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis, but everything takes place just as it would have done in reality, according to the occasion. The character of Cleopatra is a masterpiece. What an extreme contrast it affords to Imogen! One would think it almost impossible for the same person to have drawn both.

J. Middleton Murry. But the greatest mastery of imagery does not lie in the use, however beautiful and revealing, of isolated images, but in the harmonious total impression produced by a succession of subtly related images. In such cases the images appear to grow out of one another and to be fulfilling an independent life of their own. Yet this apparent autonomy is as strictly subordinated to a final impression as the steps of a logical argument are to their conclusion. Such triumphs of imagery are to be conceived as a swift and continuous act of exploration of the world of imagination—though an obvious metaphor is in that phrase. A magnificent example of this peculiar movement of mind on a scale so large that it can be carefully examined is Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*. The strange combination of imaginative autonomy and profound total harmony in that poem is characteristic of the movement of creative imagery in its highest forms. We can perhaps get a clear glimpse of the nature of this contradictory process of creative imagery—the maximum of independence combined with the most complete and pervasive subordination—in one of the rare moments when we can honestly claim to look over Shakespeare's shoulder. The famous picture of Cleopatra on Cydnus comes substantially from North's Plutarch, of which the following sentence is the original of Shakespeare's first seven lines:

> She disdained to set forward otherwise, but to take her barge in the river of Cydnus, the poope whereof was of gold, the sails of purple, and the owers of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of flutes, howboys, cythern, viols, and such other instruments as they played upon the barge. . . .

It is often said that Shakespeare followed North as closely as he could, with the minimum of original effort. It is not true. North's sentence would fall quite easily into good blank verse, but it would be nothing like—

The barge she sat in, like a burnsish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, *and so perfumed that*
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, *and made*
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. . . .

The phrases in italics are Shakespeare's additions: afterwards he keeps more closely to North, until he comes to the climax. North has it:

Others also rann out of the city to see her coming in. So that in the end, there rann such multitudes of people one after another, that *Antonius* was left post alone in the market-place, in his Imperiall seate to give audience.

Which is transformed into:

The city cast
Her people out upon her, and Antony,
Enthron'd in the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air: which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in nature.

The additions are worth attention. North's somewhat amorphous prose is given a beginning and an end. The additions are all, in spite of formal differences, essentially similes and metaphors; and, after the first, which gathers the vision into one whole which it puts imperishably before the mind's eye, the second and third develop the theme which is clinched in climax by the fourth. In them the successive elements—the winds, the water, the air—are represented all as succumbing to the enchantment of love which breathes from the great Queen and her burning barge; and by this varied return on a single motive North's inconsequential panorama is given an organic unity. It is quite impossible to conceive Shakespeare as dovetailing old and new together. Before his mind's eye as he read North had risen a picture half visible, half spiritual, in short, truly imaginative—the manifestation of Egypt, before whom the elements made obeisance. All of North that was congruous with this enchanted vision he incorporated with a flowing pen into his new creation. And the added imagery, about which he probably took no second thought, grew naturally into harmony with itself and with the whole.

Countries of the Mind.

CORIOLANUS

WRITTEN: 1607.

PERFORMED: 1608?

S.R.: 1623 Nov. 8th. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. Not a very satisfactory text: as in *Antony and Cleopatra* there are many mislineations.

SOURCE: North's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus*.

Nahum Tate's adaptation of *Coriolanus, The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or, The Fall of Caius Martius*, which he vainly hoped would 'turn to money what lay dead before', was produced in 1682. John Dennis's version, *The Invader of his Country, or the Fatal Resentment*, was driven from the Drury Lane stage after three performances in 1719.

JOHNSON. The tragedy of Coriolanus is one of the most amusing of our author's performances. The old man's merriment in Menenius; the lofty lady's dignity in Volumnia; the bridal modesty in Virgilia; the patrician and military haughtiness in Coriolanus; the plebeian malignity, and tribunitian insolence in Brutus and Sicinius, make a very pleasing and interesting variety: and the various revolutions of the hero's fortune fill the mind with anxious curiosity. There is, perhaps, too much bustle in the first act, and too little in the last.

COLERIDGE. This play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakspeare's politics. His own country's history furnished him with no matter, but what was too recent to be devoted to patriotism. Besides he knew that the instruction of ancient history would seem more dispassionate. In Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar, you see Shakspeare's good-natured laugh at mobs. Compare this with Sir Thomas Brown's aristocracy of spirit.

HAZLITT. Shakespear has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state-affairs. *Coriolanus* is a store-house of political commonplaces. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's Reflections, or Paine's Rights of Man, or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakespear himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it.—The cause of the people is indeed but little calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, 'no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage' for poetry 'to make its pendant bed and procreant cradle in'. The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty: it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates

circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favourite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things not according to their immediate impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolising faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of present excitement by inequality and disproportion; the other is a distributive faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of ultimate good, by justice and proportion. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. It admits of no medium. It is everything by excess. It rises above the ordinary standard of sufferings and crimes. It presents a dazzling appearance. It shews its head turretted, crowned, and crested. Its front is gilt and blood-stained. Before it 'it carries noise, and behind it leaves tears'. It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its train-bearers, tyrants and slaves its executioners.—'Carnage is its daughter.'—Poetry is right-royal. It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep or a herd of wild asses is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity or some other feeling makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in and with blows and big words drives this set of 'poor rats', this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary before him. . . .

The whole dramatic moral of Coriolanus is that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left.

GERVINUS. Even if we give up our usual plan of seeking in every one of Shakespeare's dramas a fundamental moral view, it is by no means unimportant, in forming a judgment on this play, whether we take the political or the psychological idea as the basis for our consideration. If we take the political struggle between the two orders to be the main point, we shall readily arrive at wrong conclusions. To instance only one. We see Coriolanus, as the chief representative of the aristocracy, in strong opposition to the people and the tribunes; hence we naturally take up the view expressed by Hazlitt, that Shakespeare had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, to the aristocratical principle, inasmuch as he does not dwell on the truths he tells of the nobles in the same proportion as he does on those of the people. Hazlitt has added excellent grounds for proving even the naturalness and need of this inclination in the poet. He showed that the poetic imagination is an exaggerating, exclusive, aristocratic faculty, that the principle of poetry is everywhere an anti-levelling principle, that the lion which attacks a flock of sheep is a far more poetical object than the flock, that we feel more admiration for the proud, arbitrary man than for the humble crowd that bow before him, for the oppressor rather than for the oppressed. All this is very true, and seems to gain more force by its application to Coriolanus. But Shakespeare's poetry is always so closely connected with morality, his imagina-

tive power is so linked with sound reason, his ideal is so full of actual truth, that his poetry seemed to us always distinguished from all other poetry exactly by this: that there is nothing exclusive in it, that candour and impartiality are the most prominent marks of the poet and his poetry, that if imagination even with him strives sometimes after effect, exists by contrasts, and admits no middle course, yet in the very placing, describing, and colouring of the very highest poetical contrasts, there appears ever for the moral judgment that golden mean of impartiality which is the precious prerogative of the truly wise. Shakespeare has depicted the man of freedom, Brutus, nay, even the harder master-spirit of the revolution, Cassius, far nobler and with much more love than the man of the aristocracy, Coriolanus. It will be allowed that, from the example of Brutus, many more would be won over to the cause of the people than would be won over to aristocratic principles by Coriolanus. If we regard Coriolanus not merely in reference to the many, but if we weigh its character in itself and with itself, we must confess, after the closest consideration, that personified aristocracy is here represented in its noblest and in its worst side, with that impartiality which Shakespeare's nature could scarcely avoid. It may be replied, the people are not so depicted. Yet even on the nobles as a body our poet has just as little thrown a favourable light at last; for it lies in the nature of things that a multitude can never be compared with one man who is to be the subject of poetical representation, and who, on that very account, must stand alone, one single man distinguished from the many. But it may be said, the representatives of the people, the tribunes also, are not thus impartially depicted. Yet where would have been the poetic harmony, if Shakespeare had made these prominent? where the truth, if he had given dignity and energy to a new power created in a tumult? where our sympathy in his hero, if he had placed a Marcus Brutus in opposition to him in the tribunate? In proportion as he had raised our interest in the tribunes, he would have withdrawn it from Coriolanus, who had already enough to do to bear his own burden of declension.

Shakespeare Commentaries.

CAROLINE SPURGEON. *Coriolanus*, however, has a central symbol and a very definite one, but it is significant that this has not been born out of the creator's feeling of the tragedy, but has just been taken over by him wholesale, with much else, from North's *Plutarch*.

It is the old tale, with which the play opens, expounded by Menenius, of the rebellion of the various members of the body—the citizens—against the belly—the senate—which they accuse of being idle while they do all the work, and the belly's answer, somewhat developed by Shakespeare, that, on the contrary, it is the 'storehouse and the shop of the whole body', sending out, through rivers of blood, sustenance to all.

The images arising out of this central theme from the body and sickness are many, nearly one-fifth of the whole; and by means of them this idea is played upon throughout, though in a somewhat languid and artificial way.

The king, statesman, soldier, horse, and trumpeter are compared to the

head, eye and heart, arm, leg, and tongue, and Menenius laughingly taunts one of the basest of the citizens with being the great toe of the rebellion. The people are the hands, the tribunes are the 'tongue o' the common mouth', or they are the mouths themselves, as when Coriolanus, turning on them, asks

> You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth? . . .

The condition of the time is a 'violent fit' that craves physic, a sore which needs a physician, for it cannot be cured by self-probing, and so on; it is wearisome to pursue it further for it is very obvious, and a rather laboured and overworked metaphor at best

It obtrudes itself throughout the play; any one on a first reading will notice and remember it, whereas it might be possible to know *Lear* or *Macbeth* very well without consciously realizing the dominating symbolic 'motives' in these plays. That is because in them the symbols are the outcome of the imagination at white heat, and thus become one with the movement and characters and could be no other than they are.

So one feels, for example, that Coriolanus is called a diseased limb or a gangrened foot because it fits in with a preconceived design, but Kent, in his agonized grief, sees the death of Lear as the release of a tortured body from the rack, not because bodily struggle and torture has been the dominating symbol throughout, but because, after the experience of burning through

> the fierce dispute
> Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay,

there was no other way possible to see it.

Shakespeare's Imagery.

CYMBELINE

WRITTEN: 1609.

PERFORMED: 1611. Dr. Simon Forman, the astrologer, saw a performance probably at the Globe in April, at any rate before his death on Sept. 12th.
1634. 'On Wensday night the first of January, 1633, Cymbeline was acted at Court by the Kings players. Well likte by the kinge.'

S.R.: 1623 November 8th. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before the publication of F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. The last play in the Folio. A fair text.

SOURCES: The wager theme: from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (the story of Bernabo of Genoa).
The historical parts: from Holinshed's *Chronicles*.
There are resemblances to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* which was written by Oct. 1610, but it is impossible to say whether *Cymbeline* or *Philaster* came first.

The 'Apparition' in v. 4 is almost certainly an interpolation.

About 1690 a melodramatic adaptation of *Cymbeline* by Thomas D'Urfey, *The Injur'd Princess*, was performed at Drury Lane. Garrick returned largely to Shakespeare's text, Posthumus being one of his best parts.

SIMON FORMAN. Remember also the storri of Cymbalin king of England, n Lucius tyme, howe Lucius Cam from Octauus Cesar for Tribut, and being denied, after sent Lucius with a greate Arme of Souldiars who landed at Milford hauen, and Affter wer vanquished by Cimbalin, and Lucius taken prisoner, and all by means of 3 outlawes, of the which 2 of them were the sonns of Cimbalin, stolen from him when they were but 2 yers old by an old man whom Cymbalin banished, and he kept them as his own sonns 20 yers with him in A cave. And howe (one) of them slewe Clotan, that was the quens sonn, goinge to Milford hauen to sek the loue of Innogen the kinges daughter, whom he had banished also for louinge his daughter, and howe the Italian that cam from her loue conveied him selfe into A Cheste, and said yt was a chest of plate sent from her loue & others, to be presented to the kinge. And in the depest of the night, she being aslepe, he opened the cheste, & cam forth of yt, And vewed her in her bed, and the markes of her body, & toke awai her braslet, & after Accused her of adultery to her loue, &c. And in thend howe he came with the Romains into England & was taken prisoner, and after Reueled to Innogen, Who had turned her self into mans apparrell & fled to mete her loue at Milford hauen, & chanchsed to fall on the Caue in the wodes wher her 2 brothers were, & howe by eating a sleping Dram they thought she had bin deed, & laid her in the wodes, & the body of Cloten by her, in her loues apparrell that he left behind him, & howe she was found by Lucius, &c.

Booke of Plaies, 1611.

JOHNSON. This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

HAZLITT. *Cymbeline* is one of the most delightful of Shakespear's historical plays. It may be considered as a dramatic romance, in which the most striking parts of the story are thrown into the form of a dialogue, and

the intermediate circumstances are explained by the different speakers, as occasion renders it necessary. The action is less concentrated in consequence; but the interest becomes more aerial and refined from the principle of perspective introduced into the subject by the imaginary changes of scene, as well as by the length of time it occupies. The reading of this play is like going a journey with some uncertain object at the end of it, and in which the suspense is kept up and heightened by the long intervals between each action. Though the events are scattered over such an extent of surface, and relate to such a variety of characters, yet the links which bind the different interests of the story together are never entirely broken. The most straggling and seemingly casual incidents are contrived in such a manner as to lead at last to the most complete development of the catastrophe. The ease and conscious unconcern with which this is effected only makes the skill more wonderful. The business of the plot evidently thickens in the last act: the story moves forward with increasing rapidity at every step; its various ramifications are drawn from the most distant points to the same centre; the principal characters are brought together, and placed in very critical situations; and the fate of almost every person in the drama is made to depend on the solution of a single circumstance—the answer of Iachimo to the question of Imogen respecting the obtaining of the ring from Posthumus. Dr. Johnson is of opinion that Shakspear was generally inattentive to the winding-up of his plots. We think the contrary is true. . . .

Posthumus is the ostensible hero of the piece, but its greatest charm is the character of Imogen. Posthumus is only interesting from the interest she takes in him; and she is only interesting herself from her tenderness and constancy to her husband. It is the peculiar excellence of Shakespear's heroines, that they seem to exist only in their attachment to others. They are pure abstractions of the affections. We think as little of their persons as they do themselves, because we are let into the secrets of their hearts, which are more important. . . .

We have almost as great an affection for Imogen as she had for Posthumus; and she deserves it better. Of all Shakespear's women she is perhaps the most tender and the most artless. . . .

The striking and powerful contrasts in which Shakespear abounds could not escape observation; but the use he makes of the principle of analogy to reconcile the greatest diversities of character and to maintain a continuity of feeling throughout, has not been sufficiently attended to. In *Cymbeline*, for instance, the principal interest arises out of the unalterable fidelity of Imogen to her husband under the most trying circumstances. Now the other parts of the picture are filled up with subordinate examples of the same feeling, variously modified by different situations, and applied to the purposes of virtue or vice. The plot is aided by the amorous importunities of Cloten, by the persevering determination of Iachimo to conceal the defeat of his project by a daring imposture: the faithful attachment of Pisanio to his mistress is an affecting accompaniment to the whole; the obstinate adherence to his purpose in Bellarius, who keeps the fate of the young princes so long a secret in resentment for the ungrateful return to his former services, the incorrigible

wickedness of the Queen, and even the blind uxorious confidence of Cymbeline, are all so many lines of the same story, tending to the same point. The effect of this coincidence is rather felt than observed; and as the impression exists unconsciously in the mind of the reader, so it probably arose in the same manner in the mind of the author, not from design, but from the force of natural association, a particular train of thought suggesting different inflections of the same predominant feeling, melting into, and strengthening one another, like chords in music.

SWINBURNE. The time is wellnigh come now for me to consecrate in this book my good will if not good work to the threefold and thrice happy memory of the three who have written of Shakespeare as never man wrote, nor ever man may write again; to the everlasting praise and honour and glory of Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Walter Savage Landor; 'wishing', I hardly dare to say, 'what I write may be read by their light'. The play of plays, which is *Cymbeline*, remains alone to receive the last salute of all my love.

I think, as far as I can tell, I may say I have always loved this one beyond all other children of Shakespeare. The too literal egoism of this profession will not be attributed by any candid or even commonly honest reader to the violence of vanity so much more than comical as to make me suppose that such a record or assurance could in itself be matter of interest to any man: but simply to the real and simple reason, that I wish to show cause for my choice of this work to wind up with, beyond the mere chance of its position at the close of the chaotically inconsequent catalogue of contents affixed to the first edition. In this casualty—for no good thing can reasonably be ascribed to design on the part of the first editors—there would seem to be something more than usual of what we may call, if it so please us, a happy providence. It is certain that no studious arrangement could possibly have brought the book to a happier end. Here is depth enough with height enough of tragic beauty and passion, terror and love and pity, to approve the presence of the most tragic Master's hand; subtlety enough of sweet and bitter truth to attest the passage of the mightiest and wisest scholar or teacher in the school of the human spirit; beauty with delight enough and glory of life and grace of nature to proclaim the advent of the one omnipotent Maker among all who bear that name. Here above all is the most heavenly triad of human figures that ever even Shakespeare brought together; a diviner three, as it were a living god-garland of the noblest earth-born brothers and loveworthiest heaven-born sister, than the very givers of all grace and happiness to their Grecian worshippers of old time over long before. The passion of Posthumus is noble, and potent the poison of Iachimo; Cymbeline has enough for Shakespeare's present purpose of 'the king-becoming graces'; but we think first and last of her who was 'truest speaker' and those who 'called her brother, when she was but their sister; she them brothers, when they were so indeed'. The very crown and flower of all her father's daughters,—I do not speak here of

her human father, but her divine—the woman above all Shakespeare's women is Imogen. As in Cleopatra we found the incarnate sex, the woman everlasting, so in Imogen we find half glorified already the immortal godhead of womanhood. I would fain have some honey in my words at parting—with Shakespeare never, but for ever with these notes on Shakespeare; and I am therefore something more than fain to close my book upon the name of the woman best beloved in all the world of song and all the tide of time; upon the name of Shakespeare's Imogen.

A Study of Shakespeare, 1880.

THE WINTER'S TALE

WRITTEN: 1610.

PERFORMED: 1611 May 15, seen by Simon Forman at the Globe.[1]
1611. 'The Kings players: The 5th of nouember A play Called ye winters nightes Tayle.'
1613. One of the 14 plays performed at Whitehall at the marriage festivities of Elizabeth and the Count Palatine.
1618 April 7, at Court.
1624. 'To the Duchess of Richmond, in the King's absence, was given The Winters Tale, by the K. company, the 18 Janu. 1623. Att Whitehall.'
1633 Jan. 16. 'The Winters Tale was acted on Thursday night at Court, by the K. players. and likt.'

S.R.: 1623, 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A good text.

SOURCES: Robert Greene's romance *Pandosto or The Triumph of Time* (1588), reprinted as *Dorastus and Fawnia* (1607).

[1] SIMON FORMAN. In the Winters Talle at the glob the 15 of maye. Obserue ther howe Lyontes the kinge of Cicillia was overcom with Jelosy of his wife with the kinge of Bohemia his frind that came to see him, and howe he contriued his death and wold haue had his cup berer to haue poisoned, who gaue the king of Bohemia warning therof & fled with him to Bohemia. . . .

Remember also the Rog that cam in all tottered like coll pixci and howe he feyned him sicke & to haue bin Robbed of all that he had and howe he cosened the por man of all his money, and after cam to the shep sher with a pedlers packe & ther cosened them Again of all their money And howe he changed apparrell with the kinge of Bomia his sonn, and then howe he turned Courtier &c. Beware of trustinge feined beggars or fawninge fellouss.

Booke of Plaies, 1611.

In 1756 Garrick produced a version of *The Winter's Tale* called *Florizel and Perdita*. By cutting two acts, 'sliding o'er sixteen years' by means of a confidant, and shipwrecking Leontes in Bohemia, he achieved unity of time and place and 'an elegant form to a monstrous composition'. The version met with 'very good success'. So did 'a very compleat and entertaining farce, called "The Sheepshearing",' by M. Morgan.

For Kean's production in 1856 see p. 258.

BEN JONSON. Sheakspear in a play brought in a number of men saying they had suffered Shipwrack in Bohemia, wher ther is no Sea neer by some 100 Miles.

Conversations with William Drummond, 1619.

For the king's players. An olde playe called Winter's Tale, formerly allowed of by Sir George Bucke, and likewyse by mee on Mr Hemmings his worde that there was nothing profane added or reformed, thogh the allowed booke was missinge; and therefore I returned it without a fee, this 19 of August, 1623.

Office Book of Sir Henry Herbert.[1]

JOHNSON. This play, as Dr. Warburton justly observes, is, with all its absurdities, very entertaining. The character of Autolycus is very naturally conceived, and strongly represented.

COLERIDGE. I think Shakespeare's earliest dramatic attempt . . . was Love's Labour's Lost. Shortly afterwards I suppose Pericles and certain scenes in Jeronymo to have been produced; and in the same epoch, I place the Winter's Tale and Cymbeline, differing from the Pericles by the entire *rifacimento* of it, when Shakespear's celebrity as poet, and his interest, no less than his influence as manager, enabled him to bring forward the laid by labours of his youth.

HAZLITT. We wonder that Mr. Pope should have entertained doubts of the genuineness of this play. He was, we suppose, shocked (as a certain critic suggests) at the Chorus, Time, leaping over sixteen years with his crutch between the third and fourth act, and at Antigonus's landing with the infant Perdita on the sea-coast of Bohemia. These slips or blemishes however do not prove it not to be Shakespear's; for he was as likely to fall into them as any body; but we do not know any body but himself who could produce the beauties. The *stuff* of which the tragic passion is composed, the romantic sweetness, the comic humour, are evidently his. Even the crabbed

[1] Sir Henry Herbert was Master of the Revels and *ex officio* censor and licenser for the printing of plays. Sir G. Buck was his predecessor. The Office Book is now lost. Perhaps the 'allowed book' (*i.e.* authorised MS.) had been mislaid during the printing of F1.

and tortuous style of the speeches of Leontes, reasoning on his own jealousy, beset with doubts and fears, and entangled more and more in the thorny labyrinth, bears every mark of Shakespear's peculiar manner of conveying the painful struggle of different thoughts and feelings, labouring for utterance, and almost strangled in the birth. . . .

The Winter's Tale is one of the best-acting of our author's plays. We remember seeing it with great pleasure many years ago. It was on the night that King took leave of the stage, when he and Mrs. Jordan played together in the after-piece of the Wedding-day. Nothing could go off with more *éclat*, with more spirit, and grandeur of effect. Mrs. Siddons played Hermione, and in the last scene acted the painted statue to the life—with true monumental dignity and noble passion; Mr. Kemble, in Leontes, worked himself up into a very fine classical phrensy; and Bannister, as Autolycus, roared as loud for pity as a sturdy beggar could do who felt none of the pain he counterfeited, and was sound of wind and limb. We shall never see these parts so acted again; or if we did, it would be in vain. Actors grow old, or no longer surprise us by their novelty. But true poetry, like nature, is always young; and we still read the courtship of Florizel and Perdita, as we welcome the return of spring, with the same feelings as ever.

JAMES AGATE. Why is *The Winter's Tale* so little popular? Some people have alleged the gap in time between the third and fourth acts. On the theory, shall we say, that devouring Time blunts more things than lion's paws—to wit, theatrical interest. It was Shakespeare's failure to live up to the dramatic principles laid down by Mr. Curdle which led the commentator Pope to entertain doubts of the play's genuineness. Hazlitt quickly disposed of Pope by saying that what slips or blunders there were in the play did not prove it not to be Shakespeare, 'for he was as like to fall into them as anybody; but we do not know anybody but himself who could produce the beauties'. . . .

I think the reason *The Winter's Tale* is unpopular is that Hermione talks too much. A genius in another school explained why 'a doll who is called Silk' should be so popular with the customers at Mindy's as follows, viz. and to wit:

'She seldom sticks in her oar, except maybe to ask a question; naturally a doll who is willing to listen instead of wishing to gab herself is bound to be popular because if there is anything most citizens hate and despise it is a gabby doll.'

Hermione while she had the chance is one of the gabbiest of Shakespeare's dolls, and her idiom is the most difficult Shakespeare ever used:

> Cram's with praise, and make's
> As fat as tame things: one good deed dying tongueless
> Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that.
> Our praises are our wages: you may ride's
> With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere
> With spur we heat an acre.

Yes: if there is anything most playgoers hate and despise it is a gabby doll who gabs like Hermione.

The Contemporary Theatre, 1944.

THE TEMPEST

WRITTEN: 1611.

PERFORMED: 1611 Nov. 1. 'By the Kings players: Hallowmas nyght was presented att Whithall before ye kinges Maiestie a play Called the Tempest.' (*Revels Account.*)
1613. 'Item paid to John Heminges upon the Cowncells warrant dated att Whitehall xx^{o} die Maij 1613, for presentinge before the Princes Highnes the Lady Elizabeth and the Prince Pallatyne Elector fowerteene severall playes, viz: . . . The Tempest . . .' (*Chamber Account.*)

S.R.: 1623, 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A good text with more detailed stage-directions than in any other play. The first play in the Folio.

SOURCES: For the Island: Narratives of the wreck of Sir George Somers, Sir Thomas Gates, William Strachey, Sylvester Jourdan, and others on the Bermudas in 1609:—
Jourdan's *A Discovery of the Bermudas* (1610).
A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia (1610). An official report.
Strachey's *A True Reportory of the Wracke and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates.*
For the plot: possibly *Die Schöne Sidea*, by Jacob Ayrer of Nuremberg who died 1605.

D'Avenant's and Dryden's adaptation was seen by Pepys in 1667. They achieve a nice classical symmetry by introducing Dorinda, a younger sister of Miranda, and Hippolyto, a young man who had never seen a woman. Caliban is balanced by the female monster Sycorax, and Ariel by the female spirit Milcha. This version was acted by Garrick and was the basis of Kemble's two versions, the second of which so infuriated Hazlitt when he saw it in 1815. 'The common place sentiments, and all the heavy tinsel and affected formality which Dryden had borrowed from the French school' made him 'almost come to the resolution of never going to another repre-

sentation of a play of Shakespeare's as long as we lived; and we certainly did come to this determination, that we would never go *by choice*'.

Macready returned to Shakespeare's play, slightly altered, in 1838, as did Phelps in 1847 and Charles Kean in 1857.

In 1673 the D'Avenant-Dryden play was turned into an opera with music by Purcell, and in 1756 Garrick produced 'a new opera, called The Tempest, altered from Shakespeare', with music by J. C. Smith.

PEPYS. At noon resolved with Sir W. Pen to go to see 'The Tempest', an old play of Shakespeare's, acted, I hear, the first day; and so my wife, and girl, and W. Hewer by themselves, and Sir W. Pen and I afterwards by ourselves: and forced to sit in the side balcony over against the musique-room at the Duke's house, close by my Lady Dorset and a great many great ones. The house mighty full; the King and Court there: and the most innocent play that ever I saw; and a curious piece of musick in an echo of half sentences, the echo repeating the former half, while the man goes on to the latter; which is mighty pretty.[1] The play has no great wit, but yet good, above ordinary plays. (7 *Nov.* 1667.)

To the Duke of York's house, and there saw the Tempest again, which is very pleasant, and full of so good variety that I cannot be more pleased almost in a comedy, only the seaman's part a little too tedious. (13 *Nov.* 1667.)

To the Duke of York's house, and saw 'The Tempest', and the house very full. (12 *Dec.* 1667.)

DRYDEN.

As when a tree's cut down, the secret root
Lives under ground, and thence new branches shoot;
So from old Shakspeare's honour'd dust, this day
Springs up and buds a new reviving play:
Shakspeare, who (taught by none) did first impart
To Fletcher wit, to labouring Jonson art.
He, monarch like, gave those, his subjects, law;
And is that nature which they paint and draw.
Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
While Jonson crept, and gather'd all below.
This did his love, and this his mirth digest:
One imitates him most, the other best.
If they have since outwrit all other men,
'Tis with the drops which fell from Shakspeare's pen.
The storm, which vanish'd on the neighbouring shore,
Was taught by Shakspeare's Tempest first to roar.
That innocence and beauty, which did smile
In Fletcher, grew on this enchanted isle.
But Shakspeare's magic could not copied be;

[1] Ferdinand's song in which Ariel echoes 'Go thy way'. This is, of course, the D'Avenant-Dryden adaptation with music by Banister.

Within that circle none durst walk but he.
I must confess 'twas bold, nor would you now
That liberty to vulgar wits allow,
Which works by magic supernatural things:
But Shakspeare's power is sacred as a king's.
Those legends from old priesthood were received,
And he then writ, as people then believed.

Prologue to The Tempest.

To return once more to Shakespeare; no man ever drew so many characters, or generally distinguished 'em better from one another, excepting only Jonson. I will instance but in one, to show the copiousness of his invention; it is that of Caliban, or the monster, in the *Tempest*. He seems there to have created a person which was not in nature, a boldness which, at first sight, would appear intolerable; for he makes him a species of himself, begotten by an incubus on a witch; but this, as I have elsewhere proved, is not wholly beyond the bounds of credibility, at least the vulgar still believe it. We have the separated notions of spirit, and of a witch (and spirits, according to Plato, are vested with a subtle body; according to some of his followers, have different sexes); therefore, as from the distinct apprehensions of a horse, and of a man, imagination has formed a centaur; so, from those of an incubus and a sorceress, Shakespeare has produced his monster. Whether or no his generation can be defended, I leave to philosophy; but of this I am certain, that the poet has most judiciously furnished him with a person, a language, and a character, which will suit him, both by father's and mother's side: he has all the discontents and malice of a witch, and of a devil, besides a convenient proportion of the deadly sins; gluttony, sloth, and lust, are manifest; the dejectedness of a slave is likewise given him, and the ignorance of one bred up in a desert island. His person is monstrous, and he is the product of unnatural lust; and his language is as hobgoblin as his person; in all things he is distinguished from other mortals. The characters of Fletcher are poor and narrow, in comparison of Shakespeare's; I remember not one which is not borrowed from him; unless you will accept that strange mixture of a man in the *King and no King*; so that in this part Shakespeare is generally worth our imitation; and to imitate Fletcher is but to copy after him who was a copyer.

Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

JOHNSON. It is observed of The Tempest, that its plan is regular; this the author of The Revisal thinks, what I think too, an accidental effect of the story, not intended or regarded by our author. But whatever might be Shakespeare's intention in forming or adopting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters. There is the agency of airy spirits, and of an earthly goblin; the operations

of magick, the tumults of a storm, the adventures of a desert island, the native effusion of untaught affection, the punishment of guilt, and the final happiness of the pair for whom our passions and reason are equally interested.

COLERIDGE. The Tempest is a specimen of the purely romantic drama, in which the interest is not historical, or dependent upon fidelity of portraiture, or the natural connexion of events,—but is a birth of the imagination, and rests only on the coaptation and union of the elements granted to, or assumed by the poet. It is a species of drama which owes no allegiance to time or space, and in which, therefore, errors of chronology and geography —no mortal sins in any species—are venial faults, and count for nothing. It addresses itself entirely to the imaginative faculty; and although the illusion may be assisted by the effect on the senses of the complicated machinery and decorations of modern times, yet this sort of assistance is dangerous. For the principal and only genuine excitement ought to come from within,—from the moved and sympathetic imagination; whereas, where so much is addressed to the mere external senses of seeing and hearing, the spiritual vision is apt to languish, and the attraction from without will withdraw the mind from the proper and only legitimate interest which is intended to spring from within.

The romance opens with a busy scene admirably appropriate to the kind of drama, and giving, as it were, the keynote to the whole harmony. It prepares and initiates the excitement required for the entire piece, and yet does not demand any thing from the spectators, which their previous habits had not fitted them to understand. It is the bustle of a tempest, from which the real horrors are abstracted;—therefore it is poetical, though not in strictness natural—(the distinction to which I have so often alluded)—and is purposely restrained from concentering the interest on itself, but used merely as an induction or tuning for what is to follow.

In the second scene, Prospero's speeches, till the entrance of Ariel, contain the finest example, I remember, of retrospective narration for the purpose of exciting immediate interest, and putting the audience in possession of all the information necessary for the understanding of the plot. Observe, too, the perfect probability of the moment chosen by Prospero (the very Shakspeare himself, as it were, of the tempest) to open out the truth to his daughter, his own romantic bearing, and how completely any thing that might have been disagreeable to us in the magician, is reconciled and shaded in the humanity and natural feelings of the father. In the very first speech of Miranda the simplicity and tenderness of her character are at once laid open;—it would have been lost in direct contact with the agitation of the first scene. . . .

The appearance and characters of the super or ultra-natural servants are finely contrasted. Ariel has in every thing the airy tint which gives the name; and it is worthy of remark that Miranda is never directly brought into comparison with Ariel, lest the natural and human of the one and the supernatural of the other should tend to neutralize each other; Caliban, on the other hand, is all earth, all condensed and gross in feelings and images; he has

the dawnings of understanding without reason or the moral sense, and in him, as in some brute animals, this advance to the intellectual faculties, without the moral sense, is marked by the appearance of vice.

HAZLITT. *The Tempest* is one of the most original and perfect of Shakespear's productions, and he has shewn in it all the variety of his powers. It is full of grace and grandeur. The human and imaginary characters, the dramatic and the grotesque, are blended together with the greatest art, and without any appearance of it. Though he has here given 'to airy nothing a local habitation and a name', yet that part which is only the fantastic creation of his mind, has the same palpable texture, and coheres 'semblably' with the rest. As the preternatural part has the air of reality, and almost haunts the imagination with a sense of truth, the real characters and events partake of the wildness of a dream. The stately magician, Prospero, driven from his dukedom, but around whom (so potent is his art) airy spirits throng numberless to do his bidding; his daughter Miranda ('worthy of that name') to whom all the power of his art points, and who seems the goddess of the isle; the princely Ferdinand, cast by fate upon the heaven of his happiness in this idol of his love; the delicate Ariel; the savage Caliban, half brute, half demon; the drunken ship's crew—are all connected parts of the story, and can hardly be spared from the place they fill. Even the local scenery is of a piece and character with the subject. Prospero's enchanted island seems to have risen up out of the sea; the airy music, the tempest-tost vessel, the turbulent waves, all have the effect of the landscape background of some fine picture. Shakespear's pencil is (to use an allusion of his own) 'like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in'. Everything in him, though it partakes of 'the liberty of wit', is also subjected to 'the law' of the understanding. For instance, even the drunken sailors, who are made reeling-ripe, share, in the disorder of their minds and bodies, in the tumult of the elements, and seem on shore to be as much at the mercy of chance as they were before at the mercy of the winds and waves. These fellows with their sea-wit are the least to our taste of any part of the play: but they are as like drunken sailors as they can be, and are an indirect foil to Caliban, whose figure acquires a classical dignity in the comparison.

SIR A. QUILLER-COUCH. And I conclude by asseverating that were a greater than Ariel to wing down from Heaven and stand and offer me to choose which, of all the books written in the world, should be mine, I should choose—not the *Odyssey*, not the *Æneid*, not the *Divine Comedy*, not *Paradise Lost*; not *Othello*, nor *Hamlet*, nor *Lear*; but this little matter of 2,000 odd lines—*The Tempest*. 'What?—rather than *Othello* or than *Lear*?' 'Yes: for I can just imagine a future age of men, in which their characterisation has passed into a curiosity, a pale thing of antiquity; as I can barely imagine, yet can just imagine, a world in which the murder of Desdemona, the fate of Cordelia, will be considered curiously, as brute happenings proper to a time outlived; and again, while I reverence the artist who in

Othello or in *Lear* purges our passion, forcing us to weep for present human woe, *The Tempest*, as I see it, forces diviner tears, tears for sheer beauty; with a royal sense of this world and how it passes away, with a catch at the heart of what is to come. And still the sense is royal: it is the majesty of art: we *feel* that we are greater than we know. So on the surge of our emotion, as on the surges ringing Prospero's island, is blown a spray, a mist. Actually it dwells in our eyes, bedimming them: and as involuntarily we would brush it away, there rides in it a rainbow; and its colours are wisdom and charity, with forgiveness, tender ruth for all men and women growing older, and perennial trust in young love.

Shakespeare's Workmanship.

HENRY THE EIGHTH

WRITTEN: 1612.

PERFORMED: 1613 June 29 at the Globe.
1628 July 29 at the Globe.

S.R.: 1623 8th November. One of the 16 plays registered by Blount and Jaggard before publishing F1.

PUBLISHED: 1623 F1. A good text.

SOURCES: Holinshed's *Chronicles*; Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

Scholars are generally agreed that there are two authors in this play. As early as 1850 James Spedding asked '*Who wrote Henry VIII?*' and, basing his opinion on a study of the verse, attributed to Shakespeare only i. 1. 2: ii. 3. 4: iii. 2. 1-203: v. 1: and the rest to Fletcher. It is difficult to believe that Shakespeare, who had recently written *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, wrote much more than the first two scenes of Act I. If he wrote all that Spedding claims his genius was deserting him. Perhaps, before leaving London, he wrote a draft of the play which was worked up and mostly re-written by Fletcher in 1612-13. It is not certain that Fletcher was the other author, but he is supposed to have collaborated with Shakespeare in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and in the lost play *Cardenio*, and the surfeit of feminine endings, the exhausted and monotonous rhythms, and the exploitation of the pathetic all sound like Fletcher.

D'Avenant produced a spectacular version of *Henry VIII* which was seen by Pepys.

SIR HENRY WOTTON. Now, to let matters of state sleep, I will entertain you at the present with what has happened this week at the Bank's side. The King's players had a new play, called *All is True*,

representing some principle pieces of the reign of Henry VIII, which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage; the Knights of the Order with their Georges and garters, the Guards with their embroidered coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now, King Henry making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain chambers being shot off at his entry, some of the paper, or other stuff, wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole house to the very grounds. This was the fatal period to that virtuous fabric, wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw, and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire, that would perhaps have broiled him, if he had not by the benefit of a provident wit put it out with bottle ale.

Letter to Sir Edmund Bacon, 2 *July* 1613.

ROBERT GELL. On Teusday his Grace (the Duke of Buckingham) was present at ye acting of K. Hen. 8 at ye Globe, a play bespoken of purpose by himself; whereat he stayd till ye Duke of Buckingham was beheaded, & then departed. Some say, he should rather have seen ye fall of Cardinall Woolsey, who was a more lively type of himself, having governed this kingdom 18 yeares, as he hath done 14.

Letter to Sir Martyn Stuteville, 9 Aug. 1628

PEPYS. Calling at Wotton's, my shoemaker's to-day, he tells me that Harris is come to the Duke's house again; and of a rare play to be acted this week of Sir William Davenant's: the story of Henry the Eighth, with all his wives. (10 *Dec.* 1663.)

Went to the Duke's house, the first play I have been at these six months, according to my last vowe, and here saw the so much cried-up play of 'Henry the Eighth', which, though I went with resolution to like it, is so simple a thing, made up of a great many patches, that, besides the shows and processions in it, there is nothing in the world good or well done. (1 *Jan.* 1664.)

The street full of coaches at the new play, at 'The Indian Queene'; which for show, they say, exceeds 'Henry the Eighth'. (27 *Jan.* 1664.)

After dinner, my wife and I to the Duke's playhouse, and there did see 'King Harry the Eighth'; and was mightily pleased, better than I ever expected, with the history and shows of it. (30 *Dec.* 1668.)

JOHN DOWNES. King *Henry* the *8th*. . . . The part of the King was so right and justly done by Mr *Betterton*, he being instructed in it by Sir *William*, who had it from old Mr *Lowen*, that had his Instructions from Mr *Shakespear* himself, that I dare and will aver, none can, or will come near him in this Age, in the performance of that part.

Roscius Anglicanus, 1708.

JOHNSON. The play of Henry VIII is one of those which still keeps possession of the stage by the splendour of its pageantry. The coronation, about forty years ago, drew the people together in multitudes for a great part of the winter. Yet pomp is not the only merit of this play. The meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Catharine have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Catharine. Every other part may be easily conceived, and easily written.

The historical dramas are now concluded, of which the two parts of Henry IV and Henry V are among the happiest of our author's compositions; and King John, Richard III and Henry VIII deservedly stand in the second class. Those whose curiosity would refer the historical scenes to their original, may consult Holinshed, and sometimes Hall: from Holinshed, Shakespeare has often inserted whole speeches, with no more alteration than was necessary to the numbers of his verse. . . .

To play histories, or to exhibit a succession of events by action and dialogue, was a common entertainment among our rude ancestors upon great festivities. The parish clerks once performed at Clerkenwell a play, which lasted three days, containing the History of the World.

BOSWELL. Having placed himself by her [Mrs. Siddons], he [Johnson] with great good humour entered upon a consideration of the English drama; and, among other enquiries, particularly asked her which of Shakespeare's characters she was most pleased with. Upon her answering that she thought the character of Queen Catharine, in Henry the Eighth, the most natural:—'I think so too, Madam, (said he;) and whenever you perform it I will once more hobble out to the theatre myself.' Mrs. Siddons promised she would do herself the honour of acting his favourite part for him; but many circumstances happened to prevent the representation of King Henry the Eighth during the Doctor's life.

Life of Johnson.

HAZLITT. This play contains little action or violence of passion, yet it has considerable interest of a more mild and thoughtful cast, and some of the most striking passages in the author's works. The character of Queen Katherine is the most perfect delineation of matronly dignity, sweetness, and resignation, that can be conceived. Her appeals to the protection of the king, her remonstrances to the cardinals, her conversations with her women, shew a noble and generous spirit accompanied with the utmost gentleness of nature. . . .

Dr. Johnson observes of this play, that 'the meek sorrows and virtuous distress of Katherine have furnished some scenes, which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespear comes in and goes out with Katherine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written.' This is easily said; but with all due deference to so great a reputed authority as that of Johnson, it is not true. For instance,

the scene of Buckingham led to execution is one of the most affecting and natural in Shakespear, and one to which there is hardly an approach in any other author. Again, the character of Wolsey, the description of his pride and of his fall, are inimitable, and have, besides their gorgeousness of effect, a pathos, which only the genius of Shakespear could lend to the distresses of a proud, bad man, like Wolsey. There is a sort of child-like simplicity in the very helplessness of his situation, arising from the recollection of his past overbearing ambition. After the cutting sarcasms of his enemies on his disgrace, against which he bears up with a spirit conscious of his own superiority, he breaks out into that fine apostrophe—

Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness! . . .

There is in this passage, as well as in the well-known dialogue with Cromwell which follows, something which stretches beyond commonplace; nor is the account which Griffiths gives of Wolsey's death less Shakespearian; and the candour with which Queen Katherine listens to the praise of 'him whom of all men while living she hated most' adds the last graceful finishing to her character. . . .

No reader of history can be a lover of kings. We have often wondered that Henry VIII as he is drawn by Shakespear, and as we have seen him represented in all the bloated deformity of mind and person, is not hooted from the English stage.

MORTON LUCE. We need hardly add that the metrical tests bear out the other evidence of a double authorship; the double endings in Shakespeare's part (as ascribed by Spedding) are 1 in 3, in Fletcher's 1 in 1·7; the unstopt, or run-on lines, in Shakespeare's part are 1 in 2·03, in Fletcher's, 1 in 3·79; in Shakespeare's part there are 45 light endings and 37 weak endings; in Fletcher's, 7 light endings and 1 weak ending; in Shakespeare's part six rhymes occur, all accidental; in Fletcher's there are ten rhymes.

Handbook to Shakespeare's Works.

THE SHAKESPEAREAN APOCRYPHA

I

The Seven Additional Plays of the Third Folio, 1664

The Third Folio was printed in 1663 for Philip Chetwinde who, to a second issue of 1664, added seven plays that had already been attributed either to W.S. or to William Shakespeare. According to the title-page of 1664:

> Unto this impression is added seven Playes, never before Printed in Folio. viz.: Pericles, Prince of Tyre. The London Prodigall. The History of Thomas Ld. Cromwell. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. The Puritan Widow. A Yorkshire Tragedy. The Tragedy of Locrine.

Of these *Pericle* is the only one that can seriously be considered as being, at least in part, by Shakespeare.

PERICLES

WRITTEN: 1608.

PERFORMED: According to evidence given at a trial in Venice in 1617 Zorzi Giustinian 'went with the French ambassador and his wife to a play called *Pericles*', sometime between 5 Jan. 1606 and 23 Nov. 1608, when he was Venetian ambassador in England.
1619 May. at Whitehall.[1]
1631 June 10. at the Globe.[2]
1660. *Pericles* appears to have been the first Shakespearean play produced after the Restoration.

[1] The Marquise Trenell on Thursday last tooke leaue of the Kinge: that night was feasted at Whitehall, by the Duke of Lennox in the Queenes greate chamber. . . . In the kinges greate Chamber they went to see the play of Pirrocles, Prince of Tyre, which lasted till 2 aclocke. After two actes, the players ceased till the French all refreshed them with sweetmeates brought on Chinay voiders, & wyne & ale in bottells, after the players begann anewe.
Letter of Sir Gerrard Herbert to Sir Dudley Carleton, 20th May, 1619.

[2] Received of Mr. Benfielde, in the name of the kings company, for a gratuity for ther liberty gaind unto them of playinge, upon the cessation of the plague, this 10 of June, 1631,—£3. 10. 0. This was taken upon Pericles at the Globe.—*Office Book.*

S.R.: 1608. '20 Maij. Edward Blount. Entred for his copie . . . A booke called. the booke of Pericles prynce of Tyre.'

PUBLISHED: 1609 Q1. 'The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Historie, aduentures, and fortunes of the said Prince: As also, The no lesse strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson.' The text, the basis of later editions, is corrupt, and possibly a shorthand report.
1609 Q2, 1611 Q3, 1619 Q4, 1630 Q5, 1635 Q6.
1664 F3, second issue. 'And unto this Impression is added seven Playes, never before Printed in Folio. viz. Pericles, Prince of Tyre. . . . The much admired Play, called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole History, Adventures, and Fortunes of the said Prince. Written by W. Shakespeare, and published in his life time.' Set up from Q5.

SOURCES: The story of Apollonius of Tyre in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1393). Laurence Twine's *The Patterne of Paynfull Adventures*, a prose version of the story (1576, reprinted 1607).

It is not clear why Blount failed to publish a Quarto after his registration in 1608. The play was not included in F1 presumably because Heminge and Condell knew that it was not all Shakespeare's work.

Acts III, IV, V are unmistakably the work of Shakespeare and contain some of his very finest poetry. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the three finely written brothel scenes in Act IV.

Acts I and II are clearly by another author, competent but undistinguished, who may also have written the choruses spoken by Gower—they are certainly not by Shakespeare. This other author may have been George Wilkins who in 1608 published his prose novel, *The Painfull Aduentures of Pericles Prince of Tyre. Being the true History of the Play of Pericles, as it was lately presented by the worthy and anceint Poet Iohn Gower*, some passages of which closely resemble the verse of the play and suggest that the novel was based on the play, and not the play on the novel.

BEN JONSON. No doubt some mouldy tale,
Like Pericles, and stale
As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—
Scraps, out of every dish
Thrown forth, and raked into the common tub,
May keep up the Play-club:

There, sweepings do as well
As the best-order'd meal;
For who the relish of these guests will fit,
Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit.

Ode to Himself written after the failure of his play, *The New Inn* (1629).

OWEN FELTHAM.

Jug, Pierce, Peck, Fly,[1] and all
Your jests so nominal,
Are things so far beneath an able brain,
As they do throw a stain
Through all th'unlikely plot, and do displease
As deep as Pericles,
Where, yet, there is not laid
Before a chambermaid
Discourse so weigh'd as might have serv'd of old
For schools, when they of love and valour told.

An Answer to Jonson's Ode.

ANON.

Amazde I stood, to see a Crowd
Of *Ciuill Throats* stretchd out so lowd;
(As at a *New-play*) all the Roomes
Did swarme with *Gentiles* mix'd with *Groomes*,
So that I truly thought all These
Came to see *Shore* or *Pericles*.

Pimlyco or Runne Red-Cap (1609).

DRYDEN.

Your *Ben* and *Fletcher* in their first young flight
Did no Volpone, no Arbaces write.
But hopp'd about, and short excursions made
From Bough to Bough, as if they were afraid,
And each were guilty of some *slighted Maid*.
Shakespear's own Muse her *Pericles* first bore,
The Prince of *Tyre* was elder than the *Moore*:
'Tis miracle to see a first good Play,
All Hawthorns do not bloom on *Christmas-day*.
A slender Poet must have time to grow,
And spread and burnish as his brothers do.
Who still looks lean, sure with some pox is curst,
But no Man can be *Falstaff* fat at first.

An Epilogue in *Miscellany Poems* (1684).

[1] Characters in *The New Inn*.

ROWE. Mr. *Dryden* seems to think that *Pericles* is one of his first Plays; but there is no judgment to be form'd on that, since there is good Reason to believe that the greatest part of that Play was not written by him; tho' it is own'd, some part of it certainly was, particularly the last Act.

Life of Shakespeare.

A. W. SCHLEGEL. *Pericles* was acknowledged by Dryden, but as a youthful work of Shakespear. It is most undoubtedly his, and it has been admitted into several of the late editions. The supposed imperfections originate in the circumstance, that Shakespear here handled a childish and extravagant romance of the old poet Gower, and was unwilling to drag the subject out of its proper sphere. Hence he even introduces Gower himself, and makes him deliver a prologue entirely in his antiquated language and versification. This power of assuming so foreign a manner is at least no proof of helplessness.

Lectures on Dramatic Art, 1808.

HAZLITT. The circumstance which inclines us to reject the external evidence in favour of this play [*Titus Andronicus*] being Shakespear's is, that the grammatical construction is constantly false and mixed up with vulgar abbreviations, a fault that never occurs in any of his genuine plays. A similar defect, and the halting measure of the verse are the chief objections to *Pericles of Tyre*, if we accept the far-fetched and complicated absurdity of the story. The movement of the thoughts and passions has something in it not unlike Shakespear, and several of the descriptions are either the original hints of passages which Shakespear has ingrafted on his other plays, or are imitations of them by some contemporary poet. The most memorable idea in it is in Marina's speech, where she compares the world to 'a lasting storm, hurrying her from her friends'.

COLERIDGE. I think Shakspeare's earliest dramatic attempt—perhaps even prior to the Venus and Adonis and planned before he left Stratford—was Love's Labour's Lost. Shortly afterwards I suppose Pericles and certain scenes in Jeronymo to have been produced; and in the same epoch, I place the Winter's Tale and Cymbeline, differing from the Pericles by the entire *rifacimento* of it, when Shakspeare's celebrity as poet, and his interest, no less than his influence as manager, enabled him to bring forward the laid by labours of his youth.

SWINBURNE. When the storm breaks upon us with the opening of the third act we know where we are. We are in the very heaven of heavens to which none can be admitted save by the grace of the greatest among poets. We are at sea, συντετάρακται δ' αἰθὴρ πόντῳ. Æschylus the father and Shakespeare the son are revealed as one God in the sight of all men not too impotent to perceive and too abject to adore: for the divine

humanity of Shakespeare is as great as even the superhuman sublimity of Æschylus. The matchless loveliness of lightning and the matchless music of thunder give here the signal, not of war with a deathless and a more than godlike enemy of an evil and omnipotent God, but of war against a woman in travail and her newborn child. The pity of it is as great and as terrible as the terror. Every verse rings and clings in the ear for ever. 'These surges that wash both heaven and hell' give such immortal echo to the transitory harmonies of an actual storm at sea as no man but one could have translated or transfigured into articulate utterance. There is no more splendid poetry in 'Othello' or 'King Lear' than Shakespeare's magnificent prodigality has lavished on the lament of Pericles over Thaisa; on a passage in a play which he cannot have taken as seriously as all readers may see that he must have taken such masterpieces of his own creation as those which he remoulded and rewrote from end to end. . . .

That any doubt should ever have been cast upon the authorship of the scenes in which the heroic purity of Marina is tried and tested as by fire is a memorable piece of evidence that the Shakespearean criticism of the nineteenth century was by no means always superior or never inferior to that of the eighteenth. The unsavoury atmosphere is not denser in the Mytilene of 'Pericles' than the air we breathe in the Vienna of 'Measure for Measure'. Pompey and his mistress, whose very names are unclean, are certainly no decenter creatures than Boult and his employers. In 'Troilus and Cressida' there are far loathsomer passages, far noisomer allusions and expressions, than can be found anywhere in Shakespeare outside the marvellously horrible and magnificently hideous part of Thersites. The author of these two canonical plays was certainly not too prudish or squeamish to have written the certainly not more offensive passages which have offended modern readers in the apocryphal play of 'Pericles'. And who else could have written them?

Introduction to Pericles.

J. W. MACKAIL. No thrill in the whole of Shakespeare is greater than that felt when after ploughing through Acts I and II and the chorus-prologue of Act III, the full swell of the incomparable Shakespearian verse bursts on us with: 'Thou God of this great vast, rebuke these surges'. From this point onwards, some patches of the original are left—and they are poor and flat enough—but the whole movement is Shakespearianized. Even in the scenes in the brothel at Mytilene, the supple elastic prose shows the master-hand: one has only to think of how Fletcher, for instance, would have handled them to be sure of this. The recognition scene in Act V is unsurpassed—one sometimes is inclined to say, unequalled—for sheer perfection of beauty in the whole of Shakespeare's work. . . . Speech has become music. In the printed texts you will find a stage-direction just before this passage, 'Marina sings'. It is not authentic. From the Quarto and Folio texts it is clear that the 'song' indicated is sung while Marina approaches, and not by her. It has not been preserved; and we do not miss it. 'When she speaks, she seems to sing.' The resurgence, but now with richer harmonies, of the

lyrical quality which in tragedy was necessarily suppressed, is very marked throughout the Shakespearian scenes of *Pericles*, and here it culminates. At the end of this scene, after Pericles' wild cry of joy,

> Mine own, Helicanus!
> She is not dead!

it melts and etherealizes into that supreme lyric utterance in which a few of the simplest, shortest, most ordinary words are transfigured and become pure air and fire:

> But what music?
> My lord, I hear none.
> None?
> The music of the spheres: list, my Marina!

In virtue of this single scene, Marina takes rank as a fourth in the triple garland of the world, beside Miranda, Perdita, Imogen.

The Approach to Shakespeare.

THE LONDON PRODIGAL

1605 Q. 'The London Prodigall. As it was plaide by the Kings Maiestie seruants. By William Shakespeare.'

A most un-Shakespearean comedy.

THOMAS LORD CROMWELL

1602 S.R.

1602 Q1. 'The True Chronicle Historie of the whole life and death of Thomas Lord Cromwell. As it hath beene sundrie times publikely Acted by the Right Honorable the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants. Written by W.S.'

1613 Q2.

An un-Shakespearean history.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE

1600 S.R.

1600 Q1. (Anon.)

1619 Q2. 'The first part Of the true & honorable history, of the Life of Sir Iohn Old-Castle, the good Lord Cobham. As it hath bene

lately acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Notingham Lord High Admirall of England, his Seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.'

This is one of the ten plays printed by Jaggard in 1619, some of them with false dates. This one is dated 1600.

The play was written by Drayton, Hathaway, Wilson, and Munday, and was no doubt an attempt to profit from the popularity of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* which had just been published.

THE PURITAN WIDOW

1607 S.R.

1607 Q. 'The Puritaine Or The Widdow of Watling-streete. Acted by the Children of Paules. Written by W.S.'

An inferior play of contemporary life.

A YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY

1608 S.R. 'A booke Called A Yorkshire Tragedy written by Wylliam Shakespere.'

1608 Q1. 'A Yorkshire Tragedy. Not so New as Lamentable and true. Acted by his Maiesties Players at the Globe. Written by W. Shakspeare.'

1619 Q2. Another of the ten plays reprinted by Jaggard, some with false dates.

The crude story of the murder by 'Walter Calverly, of Calverly in Yorkshire, Esquire' of his two young children.

LOCRINE

1594 S.R.

1595 Q. 'The Lamentable Tragedie of Locrine, the eldest sonne of King Brutus, discoursing the warres of the Britaines, and Hunnes, with their disconfiture: The Britaines victorie with their Accidents, and the death of Albanact. No lesse pleasant than profitable. Newly set foorth, ouerseene and corrected, By W.S.'

An un-Shakespearean tragedy.

II

Other Plays Ascribed to Shakespeare

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

WRITTEN: 1613.

PERFORMED: c. 1619-20, at Court?

S.R.: 1634 '8° Aprilis Master John Waterson Entred for his Copy . . . a Tragi Comedy called the two noble kinsmen by John ffletcher and William Shakespeare. vj^d.'
1646 'The 31th of October 1646. Master Moseley. Assigned over unto him . . . all the Estate, right, title & interest which the said Mr Waterson hath in these Playes following (viz)

The Elder Brother, his parte.
Mounsieur Thomas.
The Noble kinsman.
} by Mr Flesher.'

PUBLISHED: 1634 Q. 'The Two Noble Kinsmen: Presented at the Blackfriers by the Kings Maiesties servants, with great applause: Written by the memorable Worthies of their time;

Mr. John Fletcher, and
Mr. William Shakspeare.
} Gent.'

SOURCE: Chaucer's *Knight's Tale.*

According to the title page of Q the play was written by Fletcher and Shakespeare, and certainly there are two authors. Fletcher's work is easily detected by his flaccid and enervated verse and pretty pathos, and even more easily by the tainted atmosphere that he creates. Like the Restoration wits with whom his work was so popular, Fletcher has the vicious virtue of corrupting everything that he touches. The Tilburina-like sub-plot of the gaoler's daughter is at once laughable and revolting, and seems to be entirely the fruit of Fletcher's fertile and perverse invention; nothing could be more unlike Chaucer and Shakespeare. There is fine, and occasionally great verse in Acts III and V, and Shakespeare must have been mainly responsible for i. 1. 2: iii. 1: v. 1. 3: especially for the magnificent invocations to Mars, Venus, and Diana in v. 1.

This is Shakespeare:

> Thou mighty one, that with thy power hast turn'd
> Green Neptune into purple; whose approach
> Comets prewarn; whose havoc in vast field

Unearthed skulls proclaim; whose breath blows down
The teeming Ceres' foison; who dost pluck
With hand armipotent from forth blue clouds
The mason'd turrets; that both mak'st and break'st
The stony girths of cities; me thy pupil,
Young'st follower of thy drum, instruct this day
With military skill, that to thy laud
I may advance my streamer, and by thee
Be styl'd the lord o' the day;—give me, great Mars,
Some token of thy pleasure.
O great corrector of enormous times,
Shaker of o'er-rank states, thou grand decider
Of dusty old titles, that heal'st with blood
The earth when it is sick, and cur'st the world
O' the plurisy of people; I do take
Thy signs auspiciously, and in thy name
To my design march boldly.

This Fletcher:

His shackles will betray him, he'll be taken;
And what shall I do then? I'll bring a bevy,
A hundred black-ey'd maids that love as I do,
With chaplets on their heads of daffodillies,
With cherry lips, and cheeks of damask roses,
And all we'll dance an antic 'fore the duke,
And beg his pardon.

DRYDEN. For what remains, the excellency of that poet [Shakespeare] was, as I have said, in the more manly passions; Fletcher's in the softer: Shakespeare writ better betwixt man and man; Fletcher, betwixt man and woman: consequently, the one described friendship better; the other love: yet Shakespeare taught Fletcher to write love: and Juliet and Desdemona are originals. 'Tis true, the scholar had the softer soul; but the master had the kinder. Friendship is both a virtue and a passion essentially; love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by accident: good nature makes friendship; but effeminacy love. Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions; Fletcher a more confined and limited: for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly. To conclude all, he was a limb of Shakespeare.

Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

COLERIDGE. On comparing the prison scene of Palamon and Arcite, Act ii. sc. 2. with the dialogue between the same speakers, Act i. sc. 2, I can scarcely retain a doubt as to the first act's having been written by Shakspeare. Assuredly it was not written by B. and F. I hold Jonson more probable than either of these two.

The main presumption, however, for Shakspeare's share in this play rests

on a point, to which the sturdy critics of this edition (and indeed all before them) were blind,—that is, the construction of the blank verse, which proves beyond all doubt an intentional imitation, if not the proper hand of Shakspeare. Now, whatever improbability there is in the former, (which supposes Fletcher conscious of the inferiority, the too poematic *minus*-dramatic nature, of his versification, and of which there is neither proof, nor likelihood), adds so much to the probability of the latter. On the other hand, the harshness of many of these very passages, a harshness unrelieved by any lyrical interbreathings, and still more the want of profundity in the thoughts, keeps me from an absolute decision. . . .

It would be worth while to note how many of these plays (by Beaumont and Fletcher) are founded on rapes,—how many on incestuous passions, and how many on mere lunacies. Then their virtuous women are either crazy superstitions of a merely bodily negation of having been acted on, or strumpets in their imaginations and wishes, or, as in this Maid in the Mill, both at the same time. In the men, the love is merely lust in one direction,—exclusive preference of one object. The tyrant's speeches are mostly taken from the mouths of indignant denouncers of the tyrant's character, with the substitution of 'I' for 'he', and the omission of the prefatory 'he acts as if he thought' so and so. The only feelings they can possibly excite are disgust at the Æciuses, if regarded as sane loyalists, or compassion, if considered as Bedlamites. So much for their tragedies. But even their comedies are, most of them, disturbed by the fantasticalness, or gross caricature, of the persons or incidents. There are few characters that you can really like,—(even though you should have erased from your mind all the filth which bespatters the most likeable of them, as Piniero in The Island Princess for instance,)—scarcely one whom you can love. How different this from Shakespeare, who makes one have a sort of sneaking affection even for his Barnardines;—whose very Iagos and Richards are awful, and, by the counteracting power of profound intellects, rendered fearful rather than hateful;—and even the exceptions, as Goneril and Regan, are proofs of superlative judgment and the finest moral tact, in being left utter monsters, *nulla virtute redemptæ*, and in being kept out of sight as much as possible,—they being, indeed, only means for the excitement and deepening of noblest emotions towards the Lear, Cordelia, &c. and employed with the severest economy! But even Shakspeare's grossness—that which is really so, independently of the increase in modern times of vicious associations with things indifferent—(for there is a state of manners conceivable so pure, that the language of Hamlet at Ophelia's feet might be a harmless rallying, or playful teazing, of a shame that would exist in Paradise)—at the worst, how diverse in kind is it from Beaumont and Fletcher's! In Shakspeare it is the mere generalities of sex, mere words for the most part, seldom or never distinct images, all head-work, and fancy-drolleries; there is no sensation supposed in the speaker. I need not proceed to contrast this with B. and F.

Notes on Beaumont and Fletcher.

CARDENIO

1613. 'Item paid to John Heminges vppon lyke warrant, dated att Whitehall ix° die Julij 1613 for himself and the rest of his fellowes his Majesties servauntes and Players for presentinge a playe before the Duke of Savoyes Embassadour on the viijth daye of June, 1613, called Cardenna, the some of vj^{li}, xiij^{s} iiij^{d}.'

1653. Sept. 9. Humphrey Moseley, a stationer and collector of play-manuscripts, registered
'The History of Cardennio, by Mr. Fletcher. & Shakespeare.'

1727. Dec. 13. *Double Falsehood*, a play by Lewis Theobald, was produced at Drury Lane.

1728. *Double Falsehood* published with the title-page:
'Double Falshood; Or, The Distrest Lovers. A Play, As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. Written originally by W. Shakespeare; and now Revised and Adapted to the Stage By Mr. Theobald, the Author of Shakespeare Restor'd.'

Theobald's play is based on the story of Cardenio and Lucinda in *Don Quixote*, Thomas Shelton's translation of which had appeared in 1612, and was probably the source of the original play, *Cardenna*. In his preface to *Double Falsehood* Theobald wrote:

'It has been alledg'd as incredible, that such a Curiosity should be stifled and lost to the World for above a Century. To This my Answer is short; that tho' it never till now made its Appearance on the Stage, yet one of the Manuscript Copies, which I have, is of above Sixty Years Standing, in the Handwriting of Mr. *Downes*, the famous Old Prompter; and, as I am credibly inform'd, was early in the Possession of the celebrated Mr. *Betterton*, and by Him design'd to have been usher'd into the World. What Accident prevented This Purpose of his, I do not pretend to know: Or thro' what hands it had successively pass'd before that Period of Time. There is a Tradition (which I have from the Noble Person, who supply'd me with One of my Copies) that it was given by our Author, as a Present of Value, to a Natural Daughter of his, for whose Sake he wrote it, in the Time of his Retirement from the Stage. Two other Copies I have (one of which I was glad to purchase at a very good Rate), which may not, perhaps, be quite so old as the Former; but One of Them is much more perfect, and has fewer Flaws and Interruptions in the Sense . . . Others again, to depreciate the Affair, as they thought, have been pleased to urge, that tho' the Play may have some resemblances of *Shakespeare*, yet the *Colouring*, *Diction*, and *Characters* come nearer to the Style and Manner of *Fletcher*. This, I think, is far from deserving any Answer.'

There is nothing Shakespearean about Theobald's play. The manuscripts that he claimed to possess have never been found, nor did he in his edition of Shakespeare (1733), although he ascribed the original play to Shakespeare, make any attempt to publish it. On the other hand a play on the same subject was acted by Shakespeare's company in 1613; it is unlikely that Theobald knew of this record; and at about this date Fletcher was almost certainly collaborating with Shakespeare in *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

SIR THOMAS MORE

1844. The play of *Sir Thomas More* is in manuscript, and was first printed in 1844 in an edition prepared by the Rev. Alexander Dyce for the Shakespeare Society. There are no divisions in the original text, but it falls naturally into three sections, making seventeen scenes in all.

1871. Richard Simpson, basing his conclusions both on style and handwriting, claimed that part of the play was in Shakespeare's autograph: 'The way in which the letters are formed is absolutely the same as the way in which they are formed in the signatures of Shakespeare.'

1872. James Spedding reduced to three the pages that he thought could be assigned to Shakespeare, and wrote: 'If there is in the British Museum an entire dramatic scene filling three pages of fifty lines each, composed by Shakespeare when he was about twenty-five years old,[1] and *written out with his own hand*, it is a "new fact" of much more value than all the new facts put together which have caused so much hot controversy of late years. As a curiosity it would command a high price; but it is better than a curiosity. To know what kind of hand Shakespeare wrote would often help to discover what words he wrote.'

1911. Dr. W. W. Greg edited the play and showed that there were thirteen leaves in a main hand, which he called S, seven leaves of Additions in five different hands, called A-E, and notes by the Master of the Revels and censor, Edmund Tilney. Dr. Greg identified the hand of S, the writer of the original thirteen leaves, as that of Anthony Munday, and that of the Addition E as Thomas Dekker's.

1916. Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, the palæographer, after an exhaustive study of the manuscript and comparison with the six signatures of Shakespeare, pronounced that one of the Additions, that of hand D, was in Shakespeare's handwriting, but added that the case for Shakespeare's authorship must rest on 'the convergence of a number of independent lines of argument—palæographic, orthographic, linguistic, stylistic, psychological —and not on any one alone'.

[1] Dyce had dated the play about 1590. It is now thought to be five or six years later than this.

Addition D is three pages, making 147 lines, of Scene vi in which More pacifies the anti-alien riot of 1517.

1923. *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More* was published, containing papers by A. W. Pollard, W. W. Greg, E. M. Thompson, J. D. Wilson, and R. W. Chambers.

From a study of the 'good' Quartos of Shakespeare Professor Dover Wilson was able to show that misprints must often have been the result of certain peculiarities in Shakespeare's handwriting: for instance, he must have made dangerously alike the letters *c* and *i*, *r* and *w*, *e* and *d*, *e* and *o*. He was also an old-fashioned speller for, in spite of the printers' attempts to bring his orthography up to date, old-fashioned forms have slipped into the Quartos. The author of the three pages, D, formed his letters in a way that would have led to similar misprints; he was also an old-fashioned speller.

Professor R. W. Chambers showed that the author of Addition D had a political philosophy similar to that of Shakespeare, a respect for order and rank, a sympathetic understanding of the mob, and a belief that it is susceptible to oratory.

1935. The imagery of the D Addition is typical of Shakespeare's as analysed by Dr. Caroline Spurgeon in her *Shakespeare's Imagery*.

Compare Sir Thomas More's political philosophy and imagery:

> Grant . . . that you sit as kings in your desires,
> Authority quite silenced by your brawl,
> And you in ruff of your opinions clothed,
> What had you got? I'll tell you: you had taught
> How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
> How order should be quelled; and by this pattern
> Not one of you should live an aged man.
> For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought
> With self same hand, self reasons, and self right,
> Would shark on you, and men like ravenous fishes
> *Would feed on one another,*

with that of Coriolanus:

> What's the matter,
> That in these several places of the city
> You cry against the noble senate, who,
> Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else
> *Would feed on one another?*

and with that of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*:

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark, what discord follows! . . .
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> *And last eat up himself.*

Professor A. W. Pollard puts the date of *Sir Thomas More* with its Additions about 1596, and writes: 'In fact Shakespeare had a technique of his own for crowd scenes, and a technique of his own in developing the argument for order and authority, and this technique, in which the same phrases and ideas tend to recur, is so peculiar to himself that when, between *II Henry VI* at one end of the nineties and *Julius Cæsar* and *Troilus* at the other, it is found in 1596 or a little earlier, in three autograph pages contributed to the play of *Sir Thomas More*, in a handwriting admittedly of the same kind as Shakespeare's, and unlike that of any of his known contemporaries, and with slightly archaic spellings, all of which occur sporadically in good texts of his plays, it seems pedantic to refuse to acknowledge that the contributor must have been Shakespeare himself.'

If the three pages of *Sir Thomas More* really are by Shakespeare, it is clear that a knowledge of his handwriting and spelling is an invaluable aid to the elucidation of Shakespeare's text; that, in the words of Spedding, 'to know what kind of hand Shakespeare wrote would often help to discover what words he wrote'. It is with the aid of this knowledge that Professor Dover Wilson is editing the *New Shakespeare*.

EDWARD THE THIRD

1595 S.R. Cuthbert Burby entered for his copy.

1596 Q1. 'The Raigne of King Edward the third: As it hath bin sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London.'

1599 Q2.

There is no external evidence of Shakespeare's authorship save its ascription to Shakespeare in the play-list of Richard Rogers and William Ley (1656). Capell reprinted it in his *Prolusions* in 1760, and described it as 'thought to be writ by Shakespeare', on the grounds that he was the only man who could have written so well in 1595. Tennyson agreed with Capell, and Swinburne disagreed.

There seem to be two hands in the play, one of which may be Shakespeare's. The best writing is in Act II and IV. 4. The line 'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds' occurs in II. 1 as well as in *Sonnet* 94. But we cannot assign any part in the play to Shakespeare with any confidence on the basis of internal evidence only.

THE TROUBLESOME REIGN OF KING JOHN

1591 Q1. 'The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England, with the discouerie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named, The Bastard Fawconbridge): also the death of King Iohn

at Swinstead Abbey. As it was (sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Maiesties Players, in the honourable Citie of London.'

1591. 'The Second part of the troublesome Raigne of King Iohn, conteining the death of Arthur Plantaginet. the landing of Lewes, and the poysning of King Iohn at Swinstead Abbey.'

1611 Q2. 'The First and second Part of the troublesome Raigne of John King of England . . . Written by W. Sh.'

1622 Q3. 'The First and second Part of the troublesome Raigne of John King of England . . . Written by W. Shakespeare.'

The Troublesome Reign is the source of Shakespeare's *King John*, but they have only one line in common. Pope suggested Shakespeare and William Rowley as joint authors (cf. *The Birth of Merlin*), Malone suggested Marlowe, and H. D. Sykes ascribes it to Peele.

THE BIRTH OF MERLIN

1662 Q. 'The Birth of Merlin: Or, The Childe hath Found his Father. As it hath been several times Acted with great Applause. Written by William Shakespear, and William Rowley.'

Rowley is generally taken to be the author or reviser. The play is certainly not Shakespearean.

The following plays have been attributed wholly or in part to Shakespeare, though there is neither external nor internal evidence to support their claims:

Arden of Faversham. 1592. 'The lamentable and true Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent. Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the love she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat ruffins, Blackwill and Shakbag, to kill him.' The play has some merit, and was reprinted in 1599 and 1633, and first assigned to Shakespeare in the edition of 1770 which was printed by Edward Jacob who lived at Faversham.

The Pleasant Comedie of Faire Em, The Millers Daughter of Manchester: With the loue of William the Conqueror. Published in 1631, but acted 'by the right Honourable the Lord Strange his seruants' as early as 1591 when it was ridiculed by Robert Greene.

The Merry Devil of Edmonton. Performed before 1600; registered in 1607; published anonymously in 1608.

The Comedy of Mucedorus. Published 1598. *Mucedorus, Fair Em,* and *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* were bound together in Charles II's library and labelled 'Shakespeare Vol. 1'.

Humphrey Moseley, the collector of play-manuscripts, who registered *Cardenio* in 1653, also registered:

'*Henry ye first, & Hen: ye 2d.* by Shakespeare, & Dauenport.' Robert Davenport's *History of Henry the First* was licensed for performance by the King's Men in 1624.

The History of King Stephen.
Duke Humphrey, a Tragedy.
Iphis and Iantha, or a marriage without a man, a Comedy.
} by Will: Shakespeare.

Nothing more is known of these last three plays, though if they ever existed they may have perished when some manuscripts were 'unluckely burnd or put under Pye bottoms'.

In the play-lists of the booksellers Richard Rogers and William Ley (1656), Edward Archer (1656), and Francis Kirkman (1661, 1671) the following plays were ascribed to Shakespeare:

Anonymous: *Edward III, Edward IV,* 1 *Jeronimo, Leir, Merry Devil of Edmonton, Mucedorus.*
Beaumont and Fletcher: *Chances.*
Chettle: *Hoffman.*
Kyd: *Spanish Tragedy.*
Marlowe: *Edward II.*
Massinger: *The Roman Actor.*
Middleton: *A Trick to Catch the Old One.*
Peele: *The Arraignment of Paris.*

NOTE ON THE ORDER OF THE PLAYS

The following is an extract from Malone's famous *Attempt to ascertain the Order in which the Plays attributed to Shakespeare were Written,* published in Steevens's edition of Shakespeare, 1778. Malone was acquainted with Mere's *Palladis Tamia,* the early Quartos, and with 'the entries in the books of the Stationers' company, extracted and now first published by Mr. Steevens'; but then, to his observations on *Love's Labour's Lost,* he adds the epoch-making note:

'It is not, therefore, merely the use of rhymes, mingled with blank verse, but their *frequency*, that is here urged, as a circumstance which seems to characterize and distinguish our poet's earliest performances. In the whole number of pieces which were written antecedent to the year 1600, and which, for the sake of perspicuity, have been called his *early compositions*, more rhyming couplets are found, than in all the plays composed subsequently to that year; which have been named his *late productions*. Whether in process of time, Shakespeare grew weary of the bondage of rhyme, or whether he became convinced of its impropriety in a dramatick dialogue, his neglect of rhyming (for he never wholly disused it) seems to have been *gradual*. As, therefore, most of his early productions are characterized by the multitude of similar terminations which they exhibit, whenever, of two early pieces it is doubtful which preceded the other, I am disposed to believe (other proofs being wanting) that play in which the greater number of rhymes is found, to have been first composed.'

'It is probable', he concludes, 'that the plays attributed to our author were written nearly in the following succession.'

1.	*Titus Andronicus*	1589
2.	Love's Labour's Lost	1591
3.	First Part of King Henry VI	1591
4.	Second Part of King Henry VI	1592
5.	Third Part of King Henry VI	1592
6.	*Pericles*	1592
7.	*Locrine*	1593
8.	The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1593
9.	The Winter's Tale	1594
10.	A Midsummer Night's Dream	1595
11.	Romeo and Juliet	1595
12.	The Comedy of Errors	1596
13.	Hamlet	1596
14.	King John	1596
15.	King Richard II	1597
16.	King Richard III	1597
17.	First Part of King Henry IV	1597
18.	The Merchant of Venice	1598
19.	All's Well that Ends Well	1598
20.	*Sir John Oldcastle*	1598
21.	Second Part of King Henry IV	1598
22.	King Henry V	1599
23.	*The Puritan*	1600
24.	Much Ado about Nothing	1600
25.	As You Like It	1600
26.	Merry Wives of Windsor	1601
27.	King Henry VIII	1601
28.	*Life and Death of Lord Cromwell*	1602

29. Troilus and Cressida	1602
30. Measure for Measure	1603
31. Cymbeline	1604
32. *The London Prodigal*	1605
33. King Lear	1605
34. Macbeth	1606
35. The Taming of the Shrew	1606
36. Julius Cæsar	1607
37. *A Yorkshire Tragedy*	1608
38. Antony and Cleopatra	1608
39. Coriolanus	1609
40. Timon of Athens	1610
41. Othello	1611
42. The Tempest	1612
43. Twelfth Night	1614

The table on the next page is based on the researches of nineteenth-century scholars, English and German, who followed the pioneering Malone. It illustrates the development of Shakespeare's verse from the comparative monotony and inflexibility of *Henry VI* to the variety and plasticity of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, and of those parts of *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* that can with certainty be assigned to Shakespeare. The order of the plays is that of the preceding pages, for in the light of modern knowledge 'it is probable that they were written nearly in this succession'. It will be observed that, with a few interesting exceptions, the development is steady. The most violent change is the sudden leap in the number of light and weak endings in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In *Hamlet* the proportion of light and weak endings to verse lines in the play is ·3 per cent. in *The Winter's Tale* and Shakespeare's part of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* it is 6 per cent., in *Henry VIII*, 7 per cent. (See also pp. 102-112.)

The first four columns are from König's *Der Vers in Shakespeares Dramen* (1888), though the percentages have been brought to the nearest whole number to prevent a false appearance of great accuracy.

The Percentage of Rhyme is that of rhyming pentameters to all pentameters. König includes alternate rhymes as well as couplets, but excludes prologues, epilogues, masques, etc.

Light and Weak Endings: the figures are those of Professor Ingram, given in the *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society*, 1874.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHAKESPEARE'S VERSE

	Percentages of				*Number of*	
	Rhyme	*Feminine Endings*	*Run-on Lines*	*Mid-line Speech Endings*	*Light Endings*	*Weak Endings*
2 Hen. VI	3	14	11	1	2	1
3 Hen. VI	3	14	10	1	3	0
1 Hen. VI	10	8	10	1	3	1
Rich. III	4	20	13	3	4	0
Tit. And.	4	9	12	3	5	0
C. of E.	19	17	13	1	0	0
Two G. of V.	7	18	12	6	0	0
L. L. Lost	62	8	18	10	3	0
Rom. and Jul.	17	8	14	15	6	1
Rich. II	19	11	20	7	4	0
T. of Sh.[1]	4	18	8	4	1	1
M. N. Dream	43	7	13	17	0	1
K. John	5	6	18	13	7	0
M. of Ven.	5	18	22	22	6	1
1 Hen. IV	3	5	23	14	5	2
2 Hen. IV	3	16	21	17	1	0
M. W. of W.	6	27	20	21	1	0
Hen. V	3	21	22	18	2	0
Much Ado	5	23	19	21	1	1
A. Y. L. I.	6	26	17	22	2	0
Tw. Night	14	26	15	36	3	1
J. Cæsar	1	20	19	20	10	0
Hamlet	3	23	23	52	8	0
Tr. and Cr.	9	24	27	31	6	0
All's Well	19	29	28	74	11	2
M. for M.	4	26	23	51	7	0
Othello	3	28	20	54[3]	2	0
Timon	9	25	33	63	16	5
K. Lear	3	29	29	61	5	1
Macbeth	6	26	37	77	21	2
Ant. and Cleo.	1	27	43	78	71	28
Coriolanus	1	28	46	79	60	44
Pericles[2]	3	22	25	71[3]	15	5
Cymbeline	3	31	46	85	78	52
W's Tale	0	33	38	88	57	43
Tempest	0·1	35	42	85	42	25
Hen. VIII[2]	0	32	39	72	45	37
Two N. Kin.[2]	2	30	30	92[4]	50	34

[1] Whole Play. [2] Shakespeare's part. [3] A. C. Bradley's figure. [4] My figure.

CHAPTER XI

THE POEMS AND THEIR CRITICS

VENUS AND ADONIS

WRITTEN: 1592-3.

S.R.: 1593. 'xviii° Aprilis. Richard Feild Assigned ouer to master Harrison senior 25 Junii 1594. Entred for his copie under thandes of the Archbishop of Canterbury and master warden Stirrop, a booke intituled, Venus and Adonis. vj^{d}.'

PUBLISHED: Q1. 1593. 'Venus and Adonis Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua. London Imprinted by Richard Field.'
Q2 1594, Octavo 1 1595?, O2 1596, O3 1599, O4 1599, O5 1602, O6 1602, O7 1602, O8 1602, O9 1617. Five other editions before 1640.

MERES: 1598: mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia*. 'So the sweete wittie soule of *Ouid* lives in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c.'

SOURCE: *Venus and Adonis* is written in the *sesta rima*, a quatrain followed by a couplet, used by Spenser in his *Astrophel*, and by Thomas Lodge in his *Scillaes Metamorphosis*. Lodge's poem and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* gave Shakespeare his theme and also suggestions for its treatment.

DEDICATION: To the Right Honorable Henrie Wriothesley, Earle of Southampton, and Baron of Titchfield

Right Honourable, I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolisht lines to your Lordship, nor how the worlde will censure mee for choosing so strong a proppe to support so weake a burthen: onelye if your Honour seeme but pleased, I account my selfe highly praised, and vowe to take aduantage of all idle houres till I haue honoured you with some grauer labour. But if the first heire of my inuention proue deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-father, & neuer after eare so barren a land, for feare it yeeld me still so bad a haruest, I

leaue it to your Honourable suruey, and your Honor to your hearts content which I wish may alwaies answere your owne wish, and the worlds hopefull expectation.

Your Honors in all dutie,
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

COLERIDGE. But Shakespeare had shown himself a poet, previously to his appearance as a dramatic poet; and had no Lear, no Othello, no Henry IV, no Twelfth Night ever appeared, we must have admitted that Shakespeare possessed the chief, if not every, requisite of a poet,—deep feeling and exquisite sense of beauty, both as exhibited to the eye in the combinations of form, and to the ear in sweet and appropriate melody; that these feelings were under the command of his own will; that in his very first productions he projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself, except by force of contemplation and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that on which it meditates. To this must be added that affectionate love of nature and natural objects, without which no man could have observed so steadily, or painted so truly and passionately, the very minutest beauties of the external world.

Moreover Shakespeare had shown that he possessed fancy, considered as the faculty of bringing together images dissimilar in the main by some one point or more of likeness, as in such a passage as this:—

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prisoned in a jail of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band:
So white a friend ingirts so white a foe.

And still mounting the intellectual ladder, he had as unequivocally proved the indwelling in his mind of imagination, or the power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one, . . . and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feeling, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its principle and fountain, who is alone truly one.

Various are the workings of this, the greatest faculty of the human mind, both passionate and tranquil. In its tranquil and purely pleasurable operation, it acts chiefly by creating out of many things, as they would have appeared in the description of an ordinary mind, detailed in unimpassioned succession, a oneness, even as nature, the greatest of poets, acts upon us, when we open our eyes upon an extended prospect. Thus the flight of Adonis in the dusk of the evening:—

Look! how a bright star shooteth from the sky;
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye.

How many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord, in the beauty of Adonis, the rapidity of his flight, the

yearning, yet hopelessness, of the enamoured gazer, while a shadowy idea character is thrown over the whole!

Or this power acts by impressing the stamp of humanity, and of human feelings, on inanimate or mere natural objects:—

> Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
> From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
> And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
> The sun ariseth in his majesty,
> Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
> The cedar-tops and hills seem burnished gold.

Or again, it acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words,—to make him see everything flashed, as Wordsworth has grandly and appropriately said,—

> *Flashed* upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude:—

and this without exciting any painful or laborious attention, without any anatomy of description, but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature. This energy is an absolute essential of poetry, and of itself would constitute a poet, though not one of the highest class;—it is, however, a most hopeful symptom, and the Venus and Adonis is one continued specimen of it.

In this beautiful poem there is an endless activity of thought in all the possible associations of thought with thought, thought with feeling, or with words, of feelings with feelings, and of words with words. . . .

> Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
> Under the other was the tender boy,
> Who blushed and pouted in a dull disdain,
> With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;
> She red and hot, as coals of glowing fire,
> He red for shame, but frosty to desire.

This stanza and the two following afford good instances of that poetic power, which I mentioned above, of making every thing present to the imagination—both the forms, and the passions which modify those forms, either actually, as in the representations of love, or anger, or other human affections; or imaginatively, by the different manner in which inanimate objects, or objects unimpassioned themselves, are caused to be seen by the mind in moments of strong excitement, and according to the kind of the excitement,—whether of jealousy, or rage, or love, in the only appropriate sense of the word, or of the lower impulses of our nature, or finally of the poetic feeling itself. It is, perhaps, chiefly in the power of producing and reproducing the latter that the poet stands distinct.

The subject of the Venus and Adonis is unpleasing; but the poem itself is for that very reason the more illustrative of Shakespeare. There are many who can write passages of deepest pathos and even sublimity on circumstances peculiar to themselves and stimulative of their own passions; but they are not,

therefore, on this account poets. Read that magnificent burst of woman's patriotism and exultation, Deborah's song of victory; it is glorious, but nature is the poet there. It is quite another matter to become all things and yet remain the same,—to make the changeful god be felt in the river, the lion and the flame;—this it is, that is the true imagination. Shakespeare writes in this poem, as if he were of another planet, charming you to gaze on the movements of Venus and Adonis, as you would on the twinkling dance of two butterflies.

Finally, in this poem and the Rape of Lucrece, Shakespeare gave ample proof of his possession of a most profound, energetic, and philosophical mind, without which he might have pleased, but could not have been a great dramatic poet.

HAZLITT. Our idolatry of Shakespear (not to say our admiration) ceases with his plays. In his other productions, he was a mere author, though not a common author. It was only by representing others, that he became himself. He could go out of himself, and express the soul of Cleopatra; but in his own person, he appeared to be always waiting for the prompter's cue. In expressing the thoughts of others, he seemed inspired; in expressing his own he was a mechanic. The licence of an assumed character was necessary to restore his genius to the privileges of nature, and to give him courage to break through the tyranny of fashion, the trammels of custom. In his plays, he was 'as broad and casing as the general air': in his poems, on the contrary, he appears to be 'cooped, and cabined in' by all the technicalities of art, by all the petty intricacies of thought and language, which poetry had learned from the controversial jargon of the schools, where words had been made a substitute for things.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

WRITTEN: Between April 1593 and May 1594.

S.R.: 1594. '9 Maij Master Harrison Senior Entred for his copie vnder thand of Master Cawood Warden, a booke intituled the Ravyshement of Lucrece vi^d.'

PUBLISHED: 1594 Q. 'Lucrece London. Printed by Richard Field, for Iohn Harrison, and are to be sold at the signe of the white Greyhound in Paules Churh-yard.'
Octavo 1 1598, O2 1600, O3 1600, O4 1607, O5 1616. Two other editions before 1640.

MERES: 1598: mentioned in his *Palladis Tamia.*

SOURCES: Ovid: *Fasti II.* Chaucer: *The Legend of Good Women.* The poem is written in *rhyme-royal,* a seven-lined stanza.

DEDICATION: To the Right Honourable, Henry Wriothesley, Earle of Southampton, and Baron of Titchfield.

The loue I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this Pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous Moity. The warrant I haue of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my vntutored Lines makes it assured of acceptance. What I haue done is yours, what I haue to doe is yours, being part in all I haue, deuoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duety would shew greater, meane time, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship; To whom I wish long life still lengthned with all happinesse.

Your Lordships in all duety.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

HAZLITT. In a word, we do not like Shakespear's poems, because we like his plays: the one, in all their excellencies, are just the reverse of the other. It has been the fashion of late to cry up our author's poems as equal to his plays: this is the desperate cant of modern criticism. We would ask, was there the slightest comparison between Shakespear, and either Chaucer or Spenser, as mere poets? Not any.—The two poems of Venus and Adonis and of Tarquin and Lucrece appear to us like a couple of ice-houses. They are about as hard, as glittering, and as cold. The author seems all the time to be thinking of his verses, and not of his subject,—not of what his characters would feel, but of what he shall say; and as it must happen in all such cases, he always puts into their mouths those things which they would be the last to think of, and which it shews the greatest ingenuity in him to find out. The whole is laboured up-hill work. The poet is perpetually singling out the difficulties of the art to make an exhibition of his strength and skill in wrestling with them. He is making perpetual trials of them as if his mastery over them were doubted. The images, which are often striking, are generally applied to things which they are the least like: so that they do not blend with the poem, but seem stuck upon it, like splendid patch-work, or remain quite distinct from it, like detached substances, painted and varnished over. A beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary upon it. The speakers are like persons who have both leisure and inclination to make riddles on their own situation, and to twist and turn every object or incident into acrostics and anagrams. Everything is spun out into allegory; and a digression is always preferred to the main story. Sentiment is built up upon plays of words; the hero or heroine feels, not from the impulse of passion, but from the force of dialectics. There is besides a strange attempt to substitute the language of painting for that of poetry, to make us *see* their feelings in the faces of the persons; and again, consistently with this, in the description of the picture in Tarquin and Lucrece, those circumstances are chiefly in-

sisted on, which it would be impossible to convey except by words. The invocation to Opportunity in the Tarquin and Lucrece is full of thoughts and images, but at the same time it is over-loaded by them. The concluding stanza expresses all our objections to this kind of poetry:—

> Oh! idle words, servants to shallow fools;
> Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators;
> Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
> Debate when leisure serves with dull debaters;
> To trembling clients be their mediators:
> For me I force not argument a straw,
> Since that my case is past all help of law.

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. The two long poems, composed when he was nearly thirty—that 'couple of ice-houses', as Hazlitt called them, are pedantic studies of lust, without the least evidence of a dramatic gift—they are samples of good, sound, but uninspired Elizabethan verse. Yet two signs of power they do reveal: first of all that rich sensuousness and, indeed, sensuality which is almost a necessary part of great artistic endowment and with which no art, as Goethe said, can afford to dispense;—and with this, and due, no doubt, to a richness and concreteness of imagery and sense-impressions. A sensuous love of words they also show, and a meticulous care in the choice of phrases, a love of literary polish, and a laborious effort to acquire that mastery of language, which, to the artist whose medium of expression it is, must be the first and most essential endowment—or acquirement—of all.

On Reading Shakespeare.

THE SONNETS

WRITTEN: 1593-6? (But see Hotson: *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated.*)

MERES: 1598, mentions in his *Palladis Tamia*, Shakespeare's 'sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends'.

S.R.: 1609. '20 Maij Thomas Thorpe Entred for his copie vnder thandes of master Wilson and master Lownes Warden a Booke called Shakespeares sonnettes vj^{d}.'

PUBLISHED: In 1599 William Jaggard issued '*The Passionate Pilgrim.* By W. Shakespeare'. It contains twenty one short poems, the first two of which are versions of sonnets 138 and 144.
Q. 1609. 'Shake-speares Sonnets. Neuer before Imprinted. At London By G. Eld for T.T.'
(*A Lover's Complaint* was printed in this volume.)
Thorpe dedicated the volume as follows:



SHAKE-SPEARES

SONNETS

Neuer before Imprinted.

AT LONDON
By *G. Eld* for *T. T.* and are
to be ſolde by *william Aſpley.*
1609.

TITLE-PAGE OF QUARTO.

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .
Mr. W . H . ALL . HAPPINESSE .
AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
PROMISED .
BY .
OVR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
WISHETH .
THE . WELL-WISHING .
ADVENTURER . IN .
SETTING .
FORTH .
T.T.

The errors in the text suggest that Shakespeare did not see the volume through the press, though it seems probable that he approved its publication.

1640. 'Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare. Gent. Printed at London by Tho. Cotes, and are to be sold by Iohn Benson.' This edition seems to be printed from the Quarto, though eight sonnets are omitted, the rest re-arranged, and the pronouns altered so that the poems addressed to a man appear to be written to a woman. (The volume also contains *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *A Lover's Complaint*, *The Phœnix and the Turtle*, and poems 'by other gentlemen'.)

If the order of the 154 *Sonnets* in the 1609 Q. be taken as Shakespeare's, they fall into three main groups:

1-17. Addressed to a young man, urging him to marry and have children.

18-126. The young man is addressed as a 'lovely boy' (126); he is the poet's patron and of a higher rank than the poet; he steals the poet's mistress, and is forgiven (40-42); but there are further separations and reconciliations. Another poet becomes Shakespeare's rival for the poet's favour (78-86).

27-152. Addressed mainly to a faithless, dark woman, who may reasonably be identified with the poet's stolen mistress.

Many interpretations have been put upon these *Sonnets*: among others that they are allegorical; that they are dramatic and not personal; that Shakespeare wrote them merely as exercises in the fashionable sonnet-form. Some doubt the authenticity of the order of the *Sonnets*, others the authenticity of many of the *Sonnets* themselves. But assuming Thorpe's order to be approximately Shakespeare's, and most of the poems to be genuine, the main problems are the following:

Their date.

According to Meres some at least of the *Sonnets* were written and in circulation among Shakespeare's 'private friends' by October 1598 when his *Palladis Tamia* was published.

Versions of two of the *Sonnets* were published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599.

The parallels to the *Sonnets* are most frequent in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, published in 1593 and 1594; they are also very frequent in the early plays, *The Two Gentlemen*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Sonnet 104 says that three years have passed since Shakespeare first met his friend.

Probably, then, most of the *Sonnets* were written between 1593 and 1596. No doubt others were added later; for instance, 107 may be as late as 1603, and may refer to the death of Elizabeth, the accession of James I, and the release from prison of Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton.

Mr. W. H.

One theory is that Thorpe's dedication is addressed to the man who procured ('the only begetter') the *Sonnets* for him to publish. Sir Sidney Lee identifies him with William Hall, a printer, who however did not print the *Sonnets*.

More probably the 'begetter' of the *Sonnets* means the inspirer of them: Shakespeare's friend and patron to whom they are mostly addressed. The best claimant is Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. He was very handsome and only twenty in 1593: young enough to be called a 'lovely boy'. The initials, of course, are H.W., not W.H., but neither the suppression of the title nor the inversion of the initials would be very remarkable.

Another claimant is William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. It was to him and his brother, Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, that Heminge and Condell dedicated the First Folio of 1623. This, so far as we know, is the only connection between William Herbert and Shakespeare, and in any event as Herbert was not born until 1580 he was scarcely old enough to be the 'begetter' of the *Sonnets*.

Henry Willobie has been identified by some with Mr. W.H. In 1594 he published a collection of poems in dialogue called *Willobie his Avisa*, in which he tells how H.W. falls in love with the virtuous Avisa, the wife of an innkeeper, and confides his unrequited love to his 'familiar friend W.S.' who has just recovered from a similar passion. W.S. 'determined to see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor, than it did for the old player'. It is just possible that Shakespeare is W.S., 'the old player', and if so that Henry Willobie is Mr. W.H.

The Rival Poet.

There are various claimants, George Chapman being the general favourite, though as far as we know he dedicated nothing in Elizabeth's reign to

Southampton, to Herbert, or to any Mr. W.H. Other claimants are Daniel, Drayton, and Barnabe Barnes.

The Dark Lady.

There have been many guesses, but nobody really knows who she was. It seems reasonable to identify her with the mistress stolen from Shakespeare by his friend.

JOHN BENSON. I Here presume (under favour) to present to your view, some excellent and sweetely composed Poems, of Master William Shakespeare, Which in themselves appeare of the same purity, the Authour himselfe then living avouched; they had not the fortune by reason of their Infancie in his death, to have the due accomodation of proportionable glory, with the rest of his everliving Workes, yet the lines of themselves will afford you a more authentick approbation than my assurance any way can, to invite your allowance, in your perusall you shall finde them *Seren*, cleere and eligantly plaine, such gentle straines as shall recreate and not perplexe your braine, no intricate or cloudy stuffe to puzzell intellect, but perfect eloquence; such as will raise your admiration to his praise: this assurance I know will not differ from your acknowledgement. And certaine I am, my opinion will be seconded by the sufficiency of these ensuing Lines; I have beene somewhat solicitus to bring this forth to the perfect view of all men; and in so doing, glad to be serviceable for the continuance of glory to the deserved Author in these his poems.

Epistle To the Reader, Poems, 1640.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

WRITTEN: ?

PUBLISHED: 1609 at the end of the Quarto edition of the *Sonnets*.
1640, included in John Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*.

Shakespeare's authorship of *A Lover's Complaint* is questioned: J. W. Mackail suggests that the author was the rival poet of the *Sonnets*; J. M. Robertson that he was Chapman.

MORTON LUCE. Of Shakespeare's music and painting A Lover's Complaint has little indeed; but of words not elsewhere used by Shakespeare it has an extraordinary proportion—quite one to each stanza. Nevertheless it has some Shakespearean elements, mostly of the unlovelier kind. I regard it as an exercise of much earlier date than any other of Shakespeare's extant poetical work; we have nothing elsewhere so utterly crude as:

Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw.

On the other hand, while these crudities and poetical imbecilities are everywhere abundant, passages—if any—that rise above the lowest Shakespearean flight are incredibly scarce; we have plenty of immature and absolutely bad work in the 'Venus' and the Sonnets; but we have also plenty of what is good, and not a little of what is excellent.

Handbook to Shakespeare's Works.

GEORGE RYLANDS. The style of that little-appreciated Elizabethan masterpiece *A Lover's Complaint* shows an advance on the lyrical *Venus and Adonis* and the rhetorical *Lucrece*. As in the *Sonnets* the intelligence has more play and the climax, although it at once diverges into Elizabethanism, surpasses any effect in the other two narrative poems.

O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!

It surpasses Donne's *Witchcraft by a Picture*.

Shakespeare the Poet. (*A Companion to Shakespeare Studies.*)

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

PUBLISHED: Octavo 1. 1599. 'The Passionate Pilgrime. By W. Shake speare. At London Printed for W. Iaggard . . . 1599.'

Of the 21 poems in *The Passionate Pilgrim* only 5 are certainly by Shakespeare:

1. A version of Shakespeare's Sonnet 138.
2. A version of Shakespeare's Sonnet 144.
3. A version of Longaville's Sonnet in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 2.
4. The theme of this sonnet, like that of 6, 9, and 11, is Venus and Adonis. Bartholomew Griffin wrote 11, so that he may have written 4, 6, and 9. Or they may be by Shakespeare.
5. A version of Biron's sonnet in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 3.
6. See 4.
7. Author unknown. This, like 10, 13, 14, 15, and 19, is in the six-line stanza of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.
8. From Richard Barnfield's *Poems in diuers humors*, 1598.
9. See 4.
10. See 7.

11. From Bartholomew Griffin's sonnet-sequence, *Fidessa*, 1596.
12. Author unknown. 'The earliest known version of a popular ditty.'
13. See 7.
14. } See 7. These two form one poem, and are printed as such in the 1640
15. } edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*.
16. Author unknown. This poem is preceded by a new title-page: *Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Musicke*.
17. Dumain's address to 'most divine Kate' in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 3.
18. Author unknown, though possibly Barnfield.
19. See 7. This poem resembles *Willobie his Avisa*, canto xliv (1594), which is also in the same metre.
20. Four verses of Marlowe's *Come live with me*, and one verse of Raleigh's *Reply*.
21. From Barnfield's *Poems in diuers humors*. See 8.

O2. ?
O3. 1612. 'The Passionate Pilgrime Or Certaine Amorous Sonnets, betweene Venus and Adonis, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespeare. The third Edition. Whereunto is newly added two Loue-Epistles, the first from Paris to Hellen, and Hellens answere backe again to Paris. Printed by W. Iaggard.'

In his *Epistle* to the printer after *An Apology for Actors* (1612) Thomas Heywood protested against Jaggard's incorporation in O3 of the two 'Loue-Epistles' from his *Troia Britanica*:

'Here likewise, I must necessarily insert a manifest injury done me in that worke, by taking the two Epistles of *Paris* to *Helen*, and *Helen* to *Paris*, and printing them in a lesse volume, vnder the name of another, which may put the world in opinion I might steale from him; and hee to doe himselfe right, hath since published them in his owne name: but as I must acknowledge my lines not worthy his patronage, vnder whom he hath publisht them, so the Author I know much offended with M. *Jaggard* that (altogether vnknowne to him) presumed to make so bold with his name.'

THE PHŒNIX AND TURTLE

WRITTEN: 1600?

PUBLISHED: 1601 Q1. 'Loves Martyr: Or, Rosalins Complaint. Allegorically shadowing the truth of Loue, in the constant Fate of the Phœnix and Turtle. A Poeme . . . By Robert Chester. . . .

Hereafter Follow Diuerse Poeticall Essaies on the former Subject; viz: the Turtle and Phœnix. Done by the best and

chiefest of our moderne writers, with their names subscribed to their particular works: neuer before extant. And (now first) consecrated by them all generally, to the loue and merite of the true-noble Knight, Sir Iohn Salisburie.'
1611 Q2.

One of the 'Diuerse Poeticall Essaies' on the Turtle and Phœnix appended to Chester's poems is attributed to Shakespeare; the others to Marston, Chapman, Jonson, 'Vatum Chorus', and 'Ignoto'.

Love's Martyr is a collection of poems by Robert Chester celebrating, under the symbols of the Phœnix (Love) and the Turtle-dove (Constancy), the love of his patron Sir John Salisbury and his wife Ursula, and its consummation in their daughter Jane. The poem attributed to Shakespeare, however, is a celebration of the spiritual love of the Phœnix and the Turtle.

SIR SIDNEY LEE. The poet describes in enigmatic language the obsequies of the Phœnix and the Turtle-dove, who had been united in life by the ties of a purely spiritual love. The poem may be a mere play of fancy without recondite intention, or it may be of allegorical import; but whether it bear relation to pending eccelsiastical, political, or metaphysical controversy, or whether it interpret popular grief for the death of some leaders of contemporary society, is not easily determined. Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character.

A Life of William Shakespeare.

JOHN MASEFIELD. This strange, very beautiful poem was published in 1601. . . . In dark and noble verse it describes a spiritual marriage, suddenly ended by death. It is too strange to be the fruit of a human sorrow. It is the work of a great mind trying to express in unusual symbols a thought too subtle and too intense to be expressed in any other way. Spiritual ecstasy is the only key to work of this kind. To the reader without that key it can only be so many strange words set in a noble rhythm for no apparent cause.

William Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's Theatre

Chambers, Sir Edmund. *The Elizabethan Stage.* 4 vols. Clarendon Press, 1923.
Thorndike, A. H. *Shakespeare's Theater.* Macmillan, 1916.
Nicoll, Allardyce. *The Development of the Theatre.* Harrap, 1927.

A very useful book with essays by authorities on all aspects of life in Shakespeare's day is—

Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age. 2 vols. Edited by Sir Walter Raleigh and others. Clarendon Press, 1916.

Editions of Shakespeare

The Cambridge Shakespeare. Edited by W. G. Clark and J. Glover. 9 vols., 1863. The single volume *Globe* edition of W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, 1864, is the standard text for line-numeration.

The Arden Shakespeare. Edited by W. J. Craig and R. H. Case. 39 vols. Methuen, 1899-1924.

The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Edited by Sir A. Quiller-Couch and Professor Dover Wilson. A play a volume. C.U.P., 1921- . The Textual Introduction in the first volume, *The Tempest*, by Professor Wilson is an important summary of the recent Shakespeare discoveries on which the edition is based.

The Third Variorum (Boswell's Malone) 1821. The first three volumes, some 1500 pages, contain an invaluable summary of 18th-century research: Editors' Prefaces from Rowe to Malone, Malone's Life of Shakespeare, and History of the Stage, Extracts from the Stratford Register, Entries in the Stationers' Books, Additions from Henslowe's Register, etc. The first three volumes of the First and Second Variorums (Reed's Steevens), 1803, 1813, are almost as useful.

First Folio, in reduced facsimile, is a very handy volume, edited in 1876 by Halliwell-Phillipps. (His *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 7th edition, 1887, contains a mass of biographical information.)

First Folio. Facsimile edited by Sir Sidney Lee. Clarendon Press, 1902.

First Folio. Facsimiles of the plays published separately and edited by Professor Wilson. Faber and Faber.

Shakspere Quarto Facsimiles. Supervised by F. J. Furnivall. 43 vols. 1880-1889.

Shakespeare Survey I (C.U.P., edited by Professor Allardyce Nicoll) was published in 1948. It is the first of a series of yearly volumes dealing with Shakespearian discovery, history, criticism, and production over all the world.

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